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★★★★★ Hulk Hogan's five remaining tasks

★ [Redacted] Hogan's daunting mission!

★ [Redacted] Angle's wild ride!

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SEPTEMBER 2002

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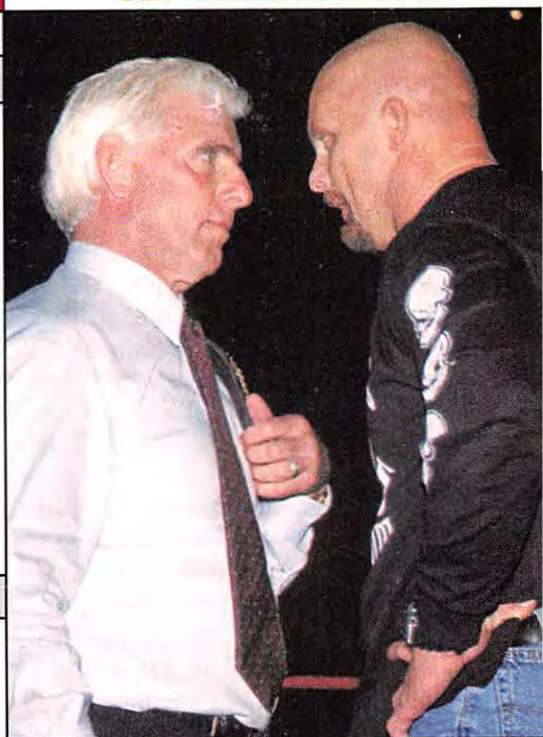
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Greg Stevens

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YOUR Letters

TEAM EXTREME REIGNS SUPREME

We're not very happy with some of the comments concerning The Hardy Boyz and Lita in your "Report Cards For The Stars" (May 2002). We especially didn't like the statement that read, "If there was a third wheel in Team Extreme, Matt was clearly it." You were also way out of line to suggest that Jeff and Lita are more popular. Matt is just as good as those two are.

We also disagree with the idea that The Dudley Boyz are wrestling's most popular tag team. *Hello!* The Hardy Boyz are far better and more popular than The Dudley Boyz have ever thought of being. What other tag team does moves like the swanton bomb or twist of fate?

And where do you get off saying Stacy Keibler is the best diva in the WWF? We *really* disagree with you saying Trish Stratus could handle Lita and Jacquelyn. Lita is truly the

best woman wrestler in the WWF because you never see another diva get up on the top rope and do moonsaults or huracanranas.

No other WWF tag team is more talented than The Hardy Boyz, and no other diva is prettier than Lita.

CHASITY AND SABRINA
Hardyboysfan2000@yahoo.com

SUPER STEPHANIE?

For crying out loud, is Will Welsh trying to become the president of the Stephanie McMahon fan club? Or does he think a few complimentary words will put him in the good graces of the rich and powerful? I wouldn't be surprised if "The Billion-Dollar Princess" sent Mr. Welsh a dozen roses for his July 2002 "No Holds Barred" column.

He depicts Stephanie as an underappreciated talent, someone who works hard for the jeers she receives. He thinks Stephanie should be praised for her huge sacrifice, the



Not every reader agreed with Will Welsh's defense of Stephanie McMahon in his July "No Holds Barred" column. Kyle Stratton felt Welsh's assessment of "The Billion-Dollar Princess" was a bit too glowing.



Have we been unfair in our coverage of The Hardy Boyz and Lita? We certainly don't think so, but a few ardent fans of Team Extreme believe that we have. They especially didn't like a few of the things written about Matt and Lita in a recent issue.

fact that she's making herself unpopular for the entertainment of others. Following Mr. Welsh's logic, Stephanie should be commended for being so hated.

I agree that Stephanie's on-air character can be very entertaining. But I think some boos recently directed toward Stephanie were not in support of her character. Fans realize she unnecessarily made herself the center of WWF storylines. She should be in the supporting cast, striving to highlight the talents of the legitimate athletes. Stephanie's absence from WWF TV indicates she believes that, too. Mr.

Welsh calls Stephanie "super." I'll stick to the original "s" word.

KYLE STRATTON
Hanover, PA

FLAIR CAN'T BE FAIR

I'm a big supporter of the WWF's brand extension. I think it's made for more compelling TV already. But I shudder to think about what will happen on *Raw* now that Ric Flair has complete control, and he doesn't have Vince McMahon to counteract him. Sure, most people believe it should be the other way around, with Flair keeping McMahon in line. Has everyone forgotten Flair's track record?

Flair has more experience as an on-air executive than any other wrestler. He served as president and later CEO of WCW. Remember what happened each time? Flair became drunk with power. Flair's ego rages out of control if there isn't someone around to restrain him.

Consider how he proclaimed The Undertaker the challenger for Triple-H's WWF World title at Backlash when McMahon had already secured the right to name the top contender. Think of how he overreacted when Steve Austin accidentally gave him a stunner. All Kevin Nash did was yell at Flair, and Flair suspended him indefinitely.

The record shows it. Flair's a dictator.

FLOPPIE BEVERLY
Raleigh, NC

HIP-HOP HYPOCRITE

Albert is one disgusting individual. Scotty Too Hotty befriended Albert and offered to be his tag team partner. While it's true that the

team of Albert and Scotty wasn't very successful, I give Scotty credit for trying.

Remember Albert's sorry excuse for turning against Scotty? Albert said he was mad at Scotty for making him dance! So Albert didn't like being "The Hip-Hop Hippo"? No one forced him into doing it!

I recently saw Albert beat Scotty on *Smackdown*. Congratulations, tough guy. You might have won the match, but without Scotty, you're as bland as ever. Come back, Grandmaster Sexay, Scotty needs you! If the WWF was willing to rehire Eddie Guerrero, I don't see why Brian Christopher shouldn't get a second chance.

SHARON ARLIS
Hebron, MD

(Continued on page 74)



Albert was so proud of himself after he betrayed tag team partner Scotty Too Hotty. He said he never wanted to be "The Hip-Hop Hippo." Reader Sharon Arlis looks forward to the day Scotty gets revenge, maybe with old friend Grandmaster Sexay.

THE Wrestler

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WHAT'S

Happëning

By Dan Murphy

LOU THESZ, THE man who defined the term world champion in wrestling for more than four decades, died on April 27 after complications from triple-bypass surgery. He was 86.

A six-time NWA World champion, Thesz is widely considered to be the greatest wrestler during the sport's golden age of the 1940s and 1950s, and many felt he was simply the greatest wrestler of all-time. He died

just a week prior to his induction into the Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame in Schenectady, New York. His wrestling career spanned an incredible seven decades.

Thesz is credited with perfecting the execution of the piledriver and the Thesz press, a standing bodypress that **Steve Austin** uses in almost all of his matches.

In his prime, Thesz stood 6'2" and weighed 225 pounds. In 1937, the 21-

year-old "wonder boy" upset Everett Marshall to claim his first NWA World championship. In addition to his scientific skills, Thesz was a renowned "hooker," legitimately one of the toughest competitors in the business.

Thesz also boasts the longest undefeated streak in wrestling history, as he went unbeaten from July 20, 1948, to March 15, 1956, as World champion. He defended the NWA title throughout North America and toured Japan many times. In fact, Thesz' loss to **Rikidozan** did a lot to make pro wrestling a viable attraction in Japan, where Thesz was treated with the utmost reverence. Also, the

formation of both the AWA and the WWWF stemmed from disputed match results against **Eduoard Carpentier** and **Buddy Rogers**, respectively, making Thesz perhaps the most influential wrestler of the 20th century.

Although he retired in the early-1980s, Thesz wrestled a special exhibition match against former student **Masa Chono** in 1990. For the past decade, Thesz continued to follow wrestling and even posted comments on several Web sites. On a personal note, I was lucky enough to meet Lou over a beer when I was a rookie wrestling journalist, and it stands as one of the highlights of my career. Lou Thesz is survived by his wife, **Charlie**.

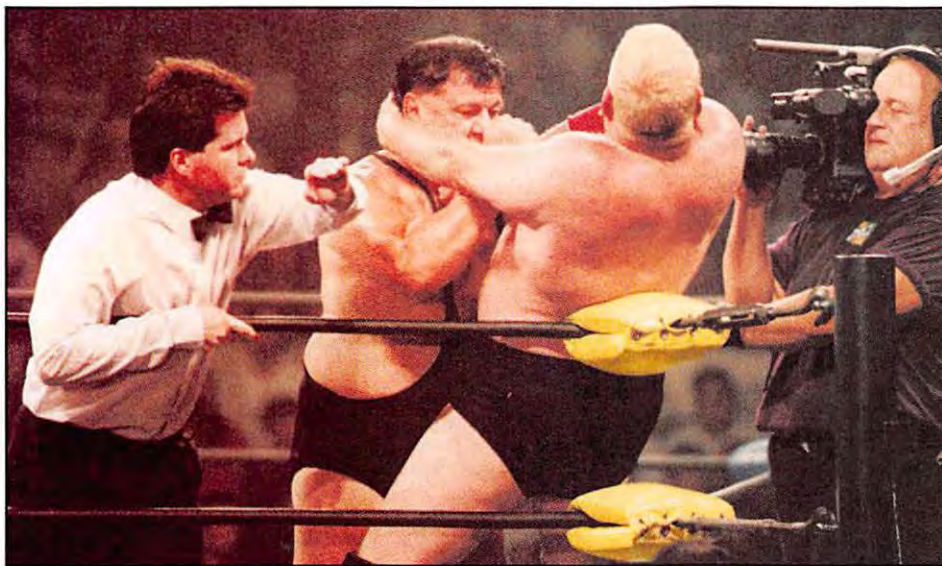
Thesz had many close friends in the business, one of them being **Stanley Weston**, the founder of *THE WRESTLER*, *Inside Wrestling*, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, and numerous other wrestling and boxing magazines. Weston died on April 11 after a nine-month battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 82.

"Mr. Weston's legacy lives with his magazines as well as the memories of the caring leadership and generosity experienced by those who worked for him," said Publisher **Stu Saks**, who worked for Weston from 1979 through 1992, when the publishing company was sold to its current owners. Look for Stu's tribute to his mentor in the September 2002 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

My condolences also go out to the family of **Wahoo McDaniel**, who died less than two weeks before Thesz. McDaniel, a former defensive lineman for the NFL's Miami Dolphins and New York Jets, wrestled for more than 20 years and won dozens of titles, including five NWA U.S. champion-



Lou Thesz autographs a poster featuring some of the greatest world champions in wrestling history during a 1998 visit to our office. Of all the champions on that poster, Thesz was probably the greatest. The legendary former NWA World champ died at the age of 86 in April.



Wahoo McDaniel never won the NWA World title, but it could be argued that, like Thesz, he was a legend in that company. Here he locks up with Dick Murdoch during a legends match at WCW's Slamboree pay-per-view in 1995. McDaniel died at the age of 63 in April.

ships. McDaniel took tremendous pride in his Native American heritage and was rarely seen without his ceremonial headdress. The master of the Indian strap match wrestled throughout the NWA territories and had some classic matches against **Manny Fernandez** in the Minnesota-based AWA. McDaniel was 63.

Finally, my thoughts and prayers go out to WWF referee **Charles Robinson**. His wife, **Amy**, recently died at the age of 30 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

And how about some news from inside the ring?

Anytime **Vince McMahon** and **Ric Flair** come to an agreement, it certainly qualifies as news. Sources close to both men say the WWF co-owners have come to an agreement on the WWF title picture—and that could mean a longer-than-expected reign for **Hulk Hogan**.

After Hogan upset **Triple-H** for the undisputed WWF title at Backlash, the feeling among many observers was that Hogan's sixth reign would be a short one. However, Hogan's win has created a situation that ultimately benefits both the *Raw* and *Smackdown* brands.

"By dropping the WWF title, Triple-H became a *Smackdown* competitor, and that makes Steve Austin and Triple-H the biggest name performers on *Raw* and *Smackdown*, respective-

ly," said one WWF source on condition of anonymity. "Each show has a top-name fan favorite that can draw ratings, and both can share Hogan for mainstream media interest. Though they're not likely to admit it, word is

both Flair and McMahon are very happy with the way Backlash played out. With Hogan's name value, both brands can thrive and each has main-event caliber talent just salivating at the chance to face Hogan for the belt, which means big-money matches down the road."

Also at Backlash, **Eddie Guerrero** capped his return to the WWF by regaining the Intercontinental title in a wild match with **Rob Van Dam**.

"Van Dam may have stolen my move (the frog splash), but now I took his title belt," Guerrero boasted immediately after the match. "Van Dam is just the latest sucker to get burned by 'Latino Heat.'"

Guerrero earned widespread praise for continuing to honor his independent commitments after signing with the WWF. "Eddie could have skipped out on our show in a heartbeat and left me trying to explain why

(Continued on page 76)

"LASHING OUT!"

By Lash LeRoux





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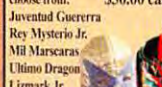


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Welsh

IT'S MID-APRIL as I write this, and the Philadelphia area's first 80-degree day of the year is on the horizon. Also, the WWF has gone through a radical change, and I'm still not exactly sure which guys are on what roster. (Is Booker T on *Raw* or *Smackdown*? What about Crash Holly?)

Yes, spring fever and the WWF brand extension have had my head spinning for weeks now. I feel so frantic that I can barely string together a few sentences without being interrupted by a beautiful, nap-inducing daydream. That's why, for the first time ever, I'm resorting to the dot-dot-dot column. Maybe I'll feel a little bit better after I get all of this out of my system.

So far, the WWF's brand extension looks good, doesn't it? The shows are more energetic and invigorating than ever. The top stars are proving why they're the top stars, and the mid-carders are finally being given their chances to shine. Storylines progression has already slowed down, since the people on the creative team don't have to use the same storylines to fill time twice a week ... All praise Vince McMahon for hiring Stacy

Keibler as his new executive assistant. Stacy's worn a bunch of different outfits since joining the WWF, but nothing captures her beauty quite like the old Miss Hancock special.

Mark Henry as a top 20 pick? I don't buy it. *WRESTLER* columnist Dan Murphy, who has spent time training under the tutelage of ECW alumnus

H.C. Loc (if you haven't already, check out his "Steel Cage" column in the June 2002 issue of *PWI* for the details), has more potential in my estimation ... That was a joke ... D-Von Dudley as a raving lunatic preacher has great potential. A word of warning about this angle, though: The WWF needs to be wary it doesn't cross any

lines. D-Von's character has PTC protest written all over it ... Why are the WWF Intercontinental and European championships both on *Raw*? Wouldn't it have made more sense to separate those two titles? As things stand right now, the most prestigious singles title on the *Smackdown* side of the fence is the cruiserweight championship. Actually, it's the *only* singles title ... Staying on the subject of titles, I'm waiting for *Raw* and *Smackdown* champions to be crowned. You know it's coming.

Kudos to the WWF for re-signing Eddie Guerrero. His feud with Rob Van Dam is one that I've been waiting years to see ... Keep an eye on the final box office numbers for *The Scorpion King*. If the movie does well (and I

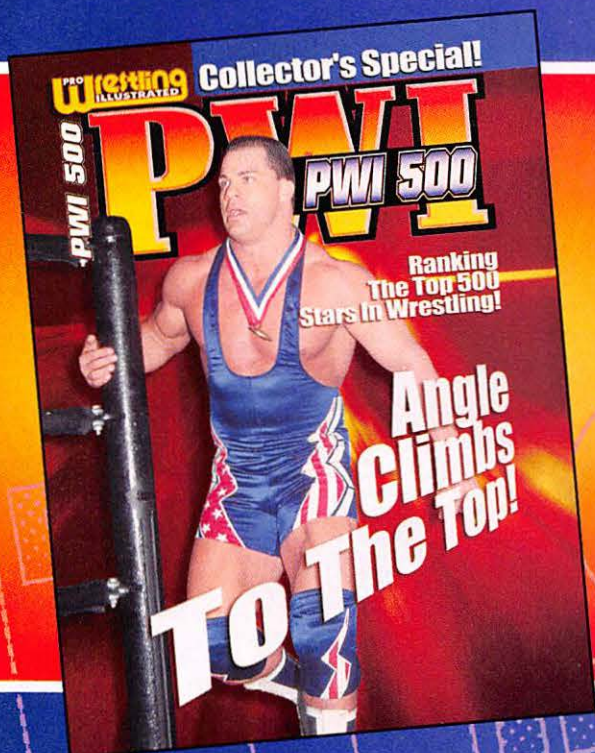
(Continued on page 80)



Mark Henry as a top 20 pick in the WWF's brand extension draft? Mark Henry as a top 20 pick in the WWF's brand extension draft? Will Welsh is still trying to figure out the logic there. And he's still asking himself that question repeatedly.

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A0502R

By
Harry
Burkett

Revisited: B

MY FIRST MEMORY of Wahoo McDaniel is from 20 years ago. Actually, my first memory of Wahoo McDaniel is my first memory of professional wrestling. In the rural area in which I lived, there was no Garden, no Spectrum, not even a Sportatorium. My friends and I had fuzzy UHF channel 41, based out of Hampton Roads, Virginia—approximately 150 miles south of my hometown in Maryland.

I remember being at the home of my friend Billy on a hot, muggy Saturday evening. It was August of 1982. We decided to watch television. He began clicking the knob of his parents' color television set to channel 41. *Click-click-click-click-click-click-click*. It seemed like the clicking went on forever. (For you kids who thought it was impossible to switch channels without a remote control, ask your parents for more information.) Finally, one more click. *Click!* There was the snowy image of an announcer at a podium interviewing a big Indian with a headdress. Behind them, a sign read "Mid-Atlantic Championship Wrestling."

Now the hard part. He fiddled with the knobs to bring the image into focus. This job took meticulous care, something akin to diffusing a ticking time bomb. And color televisions were far trickier than black and white models. If he turned the knob to the left, the bright pinks and greens would overtake the snowy image. If he turned it to the right, the image and the snow blended together, making it impossible to see anything at all. First to the left, then to the right, slightly to the left, and a hair back to the right. As Billy turned the knobs with the finesse of a safecracker, I began to hear voices.

"Wahoo, if you want that U.S. title, you'll have to go through one man, and his name is Sgt. Slaughter," said the announcer. I later learned the announcer's name was Bob Caudle. I heard a collective gasp from the studio audience. A huge man, even bigger than the Indian, walked to

the podium. He wore sunglasses and some kind of military hat; a whistle dangled around his neck. He looked like a drill instructor. He must have been Sgt. Slaughter. After all, he wore a red belt with an outline of the United States on it. "Wait a minute ..." stammered Caudle.

"Whoa!" exclaimed Billy. "Let me see if I can get it in clearer!"

Billy reached behind the TV set. "No, no!" I screamed in a panic. "Not the rabbit ears!"

Fffssshhhh! The screen went to total fuzz. "Get it back, get it back!" I yelled. I had to find out what Sgt. Slaughter was going to do with that Indian named Wahoo.

Billy was sweating. He twisted the rabbit ears wildly. "Stop ... stop right there!" I said.

(Continued on page 81)

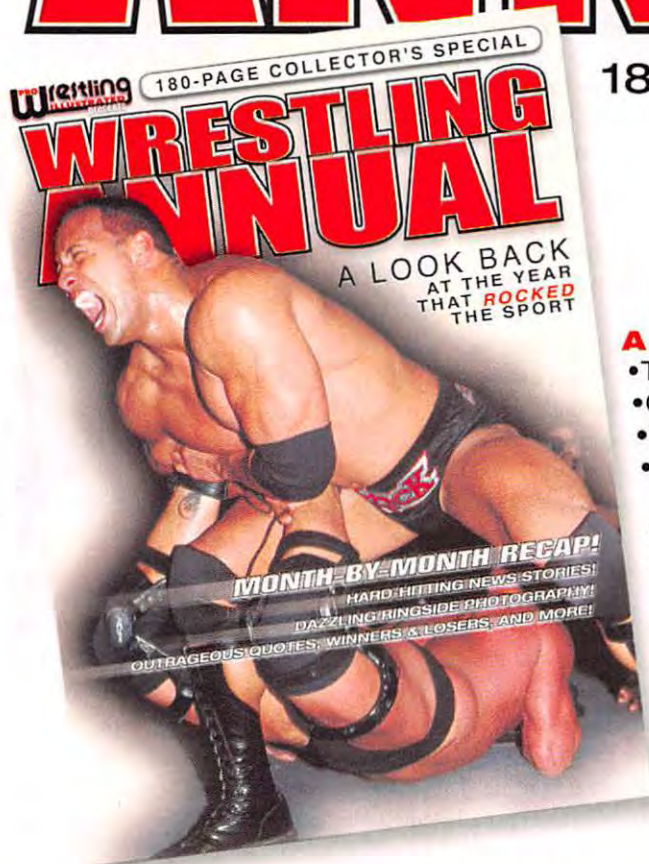


Wahoo McDaniel even had a serious look on his face when he was posing for pictures backstage. That serious approach to wrestling is one of many things Harry Burkett respected about Wahoo, who died in April at the age of 63.

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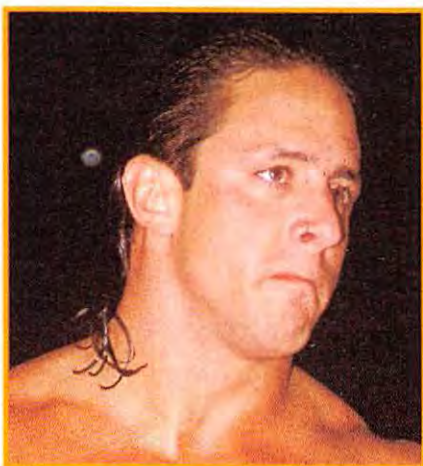
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THUMB'S UP



Thumbs Up to Billy Kidman. We all know Kidman's history with the beautiful Torrie Wilson. When both were in WCW, Wilson dumped Kidman to become Shane Douglas' new head cheerleader, only to return to Kidman's side after that partnership fizzled. Then, soon after Wilson joined the WWF, she completely forgot about Kidman and started accompanying Tajiri to the ring. By all rights, Kidman never should have ever agreed to talk to Wilson again. But Kidman's a good man, and when he saw Tajiri berating his former girlfriend (for no good reason, by the way), he just had to come to Wilson's aid. Of course, it's awfully easy to forgive someone that darn pretty. Those two could make an effective team again.

Thumbs Up to Bradshaw. Now that Bradshaw and Faarooq have gone their separate ways (because of the WWF brand extension), Bradshaw is starting to show a bit more of his personality and drive. He's quickly becoming a locker room leader for the *Raw* brand, having already stood up to the New World Order numerous times. It's going to be tough on the long-time tag team specialist to make good in the singles ranks, but we have faith that he'll do just fine after making some minor adjustments. He already has the fans behind him, he has established an alliance with Kane, and word from the back is that Ric Flair is just beginning to appreciate his value.

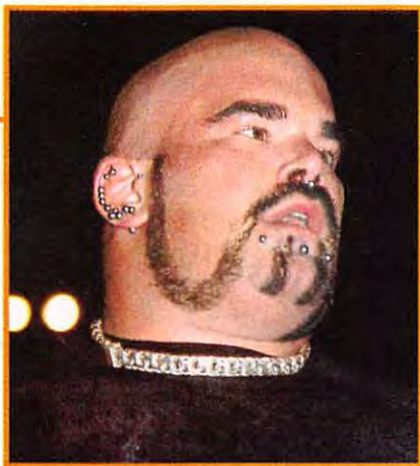


Thumbs Up to Triple-H. In the weeks leading up to his undisputed WWF World heavyweight title defense against Hulk Hogan at Backlash, Triple-H did wrestlers of his generation proud by refusing to let the fact that he was wrestling Hogan for the WWF title affect him—even though Hogan tried to play that card. In no uncertain terms, Helmsley let Hogan know that their match wasn't going to be a clash of egos like Hogan's match with The Rock at WrestleMania. And he wasn't about to be intimidated by the fact that he was competing against a legend with the fans behind him. Instead, he told Hogan that their match was going to be a knockdown, drag-out fight. That's why he's such a great champion.

Thumbs Up to Scott Steiner. Everyone knows "Big Poppa Pump" is not the kind of wrestler who's willing to follow any rules. So when World Wrestling All-Stars heavyweight champ Nathan Jones signed to face him at the WWA's Eruption pay-per-view in April, he knew he had to be ready for anything. And he got what he expected to get. Steiner valet, Midajah, got involved many times, and Steiner used the title belt as a weapon several times. As a result, he got a tainted victory to become the new champ. What we were happy to see was that Steiner looked very good in the ring, probably the best he has looked since the demise of WCW. Let's hope he's ready to wrestle full-time again, whether it be for the WWA, WWF, or someone else.

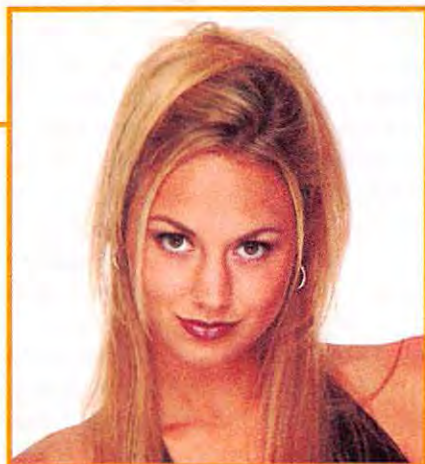


THUMB S Down



Thumbs Down to Albert. We weren't too sure what Albert was thinking when he began partnering with Scotty Too Hotty and adopted his "Hip-Hop Hippo" nickname. It just struck us as being odd. But the team worked well together and achieved some success, and we began to warm up to the tandem a bit ... just in time to see Albert turn against Scotty and throw away whatever good that they had accomplished together. Why was Albert mad with Scotty anyway? Because he was the better dancer? Scotty didn't force him to start dancing. And what's with his "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin starter set ring attire? Someone needs to get into this guy's ear and tell him which way is up.

Thumbs Down to Stacy Keibler. After her partnership with The Dudley Boyz fell apart, we thought that the leggy blonde might right her ways and join our side of the fight again. Boy, were we ever wrong. Not only did she remain a heel, but by becoming Vince McMahon's new personal assistant, she's partnered up with the most devious and conniving person in the history of the sport! Does she not remember Vince's history with Trish Stratus? Don't get us wrong, we definitely appreciate the return of the Miss Hancock outfit. We just wish she'd realize that the fans want to cheer for her, not against her. That might be the only thing preventing her from becoming one of wrestling's most popular females of all-time.



Thumbs Down to X-Pac. When will this guy's strange fascination with humiliating Kane come to an end? Didn't he do enough emotional damage to the already emotionally scarred Kane when he stole Kane's girlfriend, Tori, a couple of years ago? Now he has to go after Kane again and try to unmask him? That kind of behavior is simply unacceptable. We'd like to see X-Pac try to get the better of someone he doesn't already have the mental edge over. Maybe then he'd prove that he's more than just an NWO/DeGeneration X tagalong. And maybe then he'd get more people to respect him and stop chanting, "X-Pac sucks!"

Thumbs Down to Paul Heyman. Heyman loves getting people to drink his special brand of "Kool-Aid" (Jim Ross' term). Because of that, some people have called him wrestling's greatest cult leader, with ECW being his greatest achievement in that arena. Well, now it looks like Heyman is starting another cult, and his first disciple is former NCAA wrestling champion Brock Lesnar, a man oozing potential. Of course, you can't really fault Lesnar, because he's fairly new to the pro game and he probably doesn't know any better. It's just unfortunate that someone as unscrupulous as Heyman is pulling the young guy's strings, even if Heyman is Lesnar's "agent" and not his manager.



CORRESPONDENTS

Reports

Kansas City, MO, WWF Backlash Correspondent: Liz Hunter

Two former allies-turned-bitter enemies simply wanted to humiliate each other at Backlash. Kurt Angle wanted to avenge his 2001 King of the Ring final loss to Edge by defeating him in a convincing fashion. Edge, on the other hand, had been playing juvenile pranks on Angle for the previous few weeks—and feared he would look silly if he lost.

Angle and Edge went all out for the first several minutes, until both were laying on the mat, hardly able to catch their breath. That was a testament to the overall intensity of the match, because both men are known for their tremendous endurance. Angle got to his feet first, but Edge gained the advantage with a back bodydrop and nailed the former world champion with a gourdbuster. Unfortunately for him, Angle kicked out at the two-count.

Next, Angle caught Edge on the top rope and heaved him to the mat. Like Edge, he scored only a two-count in a subsequent pin attempt. Angle followed that with a series of German suplexes, obviously adopted from the repertoire of Chris Benoit. Soon, both men were battling on the arena floor.

Back in the ring, Edge mounted the top turnbuckle this time and followed through with a missile dropkick. Hoping for victory, Edge attempted a DDT, which was blocked by Angle. The Olympian capitalized on the momentum by executing the Angle slam for another pin attempt. Edge escaped again.

Angle proceeded to clamp on the anklelock. Edge nearly reached the ropes, but Angle yanked him back into the center of the ring. Then, Edge pulled a rare feat, reversing the anklelock into a pin attempt. Angle kicked out and, in frustration, grabbed a steel chair. He swung wildly at Edge, who ducked, causing the chair to hit the rope, bounce back, and hit Angle squarely in the face. Edge scored another close near-fall.

With Angle standing limp in the corner, Edge went for



Kurt Angle had reason to be dazed and exhausted after his match with Edge at Backlash. Both men absorbed tons of punishment and both looked like they were in danger of losing several times. Angle ended up winning by pinfall, but Edge really wasn't a loser in this bout.

the spear. Angle must have been waiting for that move all night. He stole Edge's momentum and executed the Angle slam, this time for the three-count at the 13-minute mark. And Edge didn't look silly for the loss—he looked a lot like a future main-eventer.

In other bouts: Hulk Hogan beat Triple-H for the World title ... World tag team champions Billy Gunn & Chuck Palumbo beat Al Snow & Maven ... The Undertaker defeated Steve Austin to earn a World heavyweight title shot at Judgment Day ... Eddie Guerrero pinned Rob Van Dam for the Intercontinental belt ... Brock Lesnar defeated Jeff Hardy when Hardy was declared unfit to continue ... Women's champion Jazz beat Trish Stratus by submission ... Scott Hall beat Bradshaw ... Tajiri regained the cruiserweight title from Billy Kidman.

Glen Burnie, MD, Maryland Championship Wrestling Correspondent: Dan Jenkins

More than 1,600 people packed into Michael's Eighth Avenue to see the wrestling debut of the popular security

(Continued on page 84)



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POINT:

FANS WILL WATCH JARRETT'S WEEKLY PAY-PER-VIEWS

By Liz Hunter

I'VE WATCHED SO many "alternatives" to the WWF crash and burn recently that I have to assume that any other promotion presenting itself as such will soon end up in the scrap heap, too. MECW, run by the mysterious John Collins, turned out to be a complete joke and died a very quick death. We're still waiting for the XWF to come up with a TV deal, but how long should we keep waiting? And the first World Wrestling All-Stars pay-per-view in the U.S. left me thinking that promotion would be better off sticking to running shows in Australia and the U.K. and forget about America.

But something is telling me not to dismiss the chances for success of the new Jerry Jarrett-promoted organization. Starting in June and working in conjunction with the NWA, the Jarretts plan to run weekly two-hour pay-per-views that will cost the home viewer just \$9.95 per show.

That something is the Jarrett name. And I'm not talking about Jeff. As some of you may remember, Jerry Jarrett (Jeff's father) turned the Memphis-based USWA into one of wrestling's hottest and more successful territories in the late-1980s and early-1990s by booking some of the most exciting feuds of either decade.

Unlike some of the other charlatans who have risen to the surface since the demise of WCW and ECW, Jerry



Jeff Jarrett vs. Brian Christopher was the main event of the WWA's first pay-per-view in the U.S. and could be a featured match on one of Jerry Jarrett's weekly pay-per-views this summer. Liz Hunter believes we shouldn't be too quick to dismiss the Jarretts' chances for success with this new venture.

Jarrett has demonstrated his ability to build a wrestling organization from the ground floor up. Plus, he's proven his business savvy in other non-wrestling related ventures. This isn't a man who is getting back into the game just because he loves wrestling or because he's an egomaniac. He's doing this because he thinks it can work.

So Jerry Jarrett is a good businessman. So what. Why will fans buy his pay-per-views, you ask? Because "Double-J" Sr. knows what it takes to avoid the devastating mistakes so

many wrestling newcomers make so often.

In fact, Jarrett has long been celebrated within the wrestling industry for being a superior judge of talent and a superior businessman. So much so, insiders felt that Jarrett was one of the few wrestling minds who could have saved WCW during its downfall (Jarrett actually wanted to buy the company and had a plan for resurrecting it, but WCW declined).

Jeff's years of experience in the business can only help. Sure, a lot of people thought he was pushed too much in WCW, that he didn't quite have what it took to be a main-eventer, but in the right situation, I think he can be. And he's always managed to work his way into feature matches no matter which promotion he's been in. That demonstrates that he at least has a head for the game.

The bottom line is, few people are as qualified as the Jarretts to run a promotion that can offer some alternative to "Planet McMahon." Maybe the Jarrett experiment won't bring down the WWF, but I don't think that's the goal here. The Jarretts want to give fans an alternative, and I'm betting that they will be pleased with what they see.

At just \$9.95 per show, I'm sure wrestling fans will realize it's worth every penny.

Liz Hunter is a contributing writer for THE WRESTLER.

COUNTERPOINT:

FANS MIGHT WATCH, BUT NOT EVERY WEEK

By Frank Krewda

THERE IS NO doubt in my mind that any wrestling endeavor Jerry Jarrett directs will be far superior to all the nonsense we've suffered through so far. But whether or not the fans will shell out \$9.95 per week to keep up with a running pay-per-view is a matter of economics, if you ask me.

Why pay the Jarretts a saw-buck for a few hours of wrestling when the WWF offers more wrestling and with bigger stars for free? Is the desire for some other brand name that strong that people will make room in their weekly budgets for a PPV? What about PPVs that have only a few big names? Not likely.

Besides, it's taken the WWF more than five years to gain its stranglehold on the business. No promotion, not even Jerry Jarrett's, is going to steal that thunder, especially without a national program to build the card.

Let's face it: WWF fans have been conditioned to hate anything WCW. Jeff Jarrett is WCW. Jerry Jarrett may not be WCW, but he's Memphis, which to most fans means he's a whole lot closer to WCW than the WWF.

And while Jerry Jarrett's business accomplishments are to be commended, how useful are they when



Ken Shamrock is one of the few relatively big-name wrestlers who could be available to wrestle on these Jarrett pay-per-views, but Frank Krewda doesn't see how the new promotion can succeed when there aren't enough superstars or even potential superstars not signed to a WWF contract out there.

the only available talent is WWF castoffs and independent standouts who haven't had much national exposure? Fans weren't willing to watch Jeff Jarrett in WCW at the end, so why would they pay \$9.95 to watch

him on Wednesday nights?

Of course, there is also the economy itself to consider. Now is not the time to hit up the hard-working public for money, especially when the best you can offer is a WCW/ECW reunion.

People simply aren't going to spend for a promotion that's geared to take their money, which is what the Jarrett promotion would do. Ask yourself, Liz, if you were a casual fan, would you throw down \$9.95 a week to watch a pay-per-view that hasn't been hyped and built on free TV? Maybe you'd tune in once or twice at the beginning and maybe every now and then after that, but every week? Come on. Dare I even ask how most fans will know about the Jarrett offerings if they don't have Internet access or see this magazine?

I agree with you on one thing, though, Liz. All things being equal, few people in the wrestling business are as qualified as the Jarretts to head up a new promotion. Unfortunately, all things are not equal: The WWF has almost all the meaningful talent, and, more importantly, it has the hearts, the minds, and the wallets of the wrestling fans.

One weekly pay-per-view show, no matter who promotes it, will not be enough to change that.

Frank Krewda is a senior writer for THE WRESTLER.

Introducing

BOBBY RUDE

By Harry Burkett

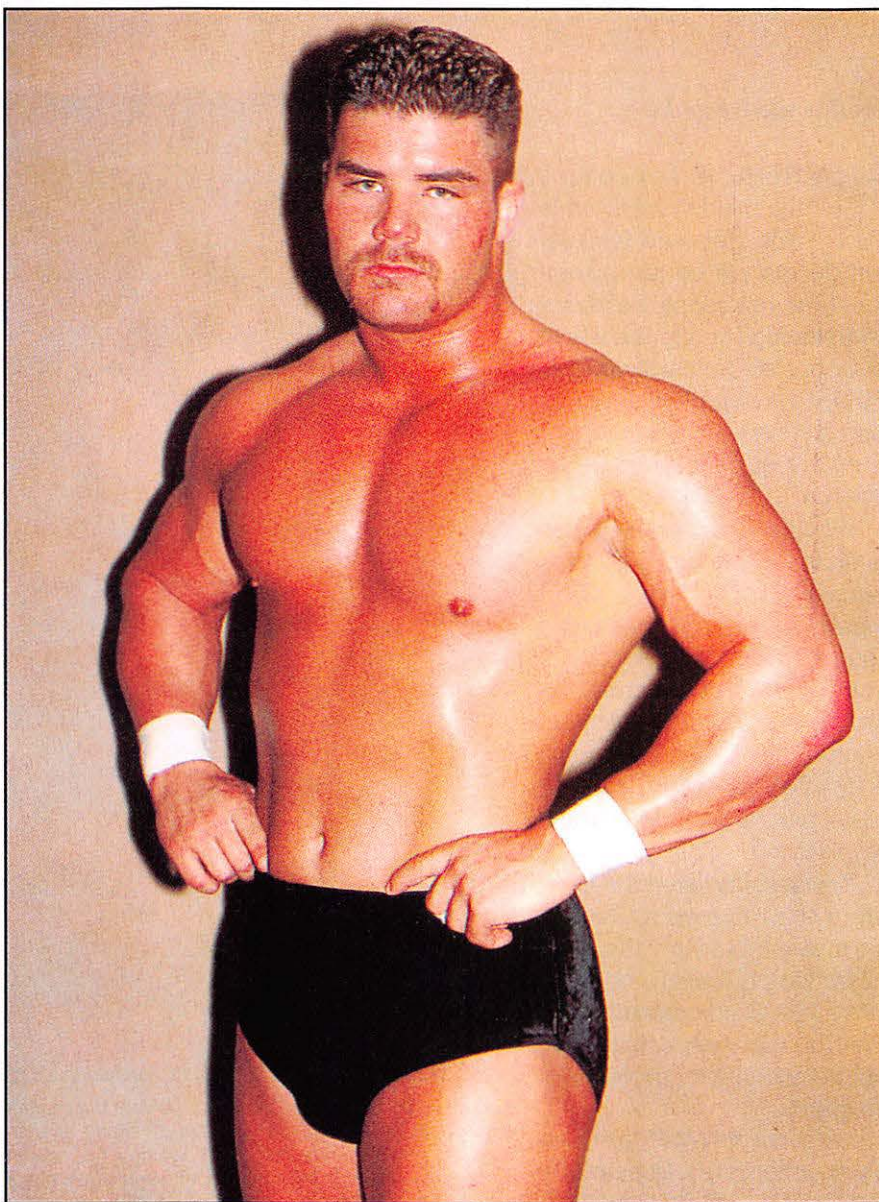
SEAN MORLEY ATTRACTED a cult following in his home province of Ontario when he became a wrestler of international stature. To Bobby Rude, Morley was a living example of how it was possible to fulfill one's dreams and exceed expectations. He wasn't surprised when Morley got his big break as Val Venis in the WWF.

In 1996, the Peterborough native met Morley while tending bar. The casual acquaintance led to a full-blown friendship, as the two trained at a local gym together. Long after abandoning his childhood dream of becoming a hockey star, the 19-year-old thought a pro wrestling career was a more-than-adequate substitute.

The young man kept that dream to himself until he met Morley. Following a stint in Puerto Rico, Morley decided he wanted to promote a wrestling show in Ontario. He asked Rude if he would like to be part of the security detail, in return for learning a few basics in the ring. Rude eagerly accepted the invitation.

"I went to his house, where he taught me some fundamentals," recalled Rude. "After locking up and taking a few bumps, I was hooked. I felt as if I had natural timing."

When Morley became a superstar in the WWF, he had less time to spend in Ontario. Rude needed a new mentor. There was none better than Shane Sewell, otherwise known as Glamour Boy Shane—Morley's former partner in Puerto Rico. Eight months passed before Sewell could train him on a regular basis. When Sewell obtained a ring, the two trained in three-hour sessions for four consecutive weekends.



Photos by Brandi Mankiewicz

This protege of Val Venis and Glamour Boy Shane thinks he has the edge. He wants to be larger than life. Bobby Rude wants to become the WWF's next Canadian superstar

"By the end of the first session, I was running spots with Shane," said Rude. "He said I was a natural because I picked up on everything. He also said that I had charisma. I took that as a compliment because Shane is 'Mr. Charisma.'"

A mere three weeks later, in the summer of 1998, Rude was booked for his debut. He lost to Pete Rock. Despite the loss, Rude knew he had made the right career choice.

"I was surprised that I was so comfortable with it," remembered Rude. "In school, I was the kind of kid who was shy and didn't want to do presentations in class. But in the ring—whether I'm wrestling in front of 100 or 2,000 people—I feel at home there."

Obviously, Rude was more confident in his wrestling skills than he was in his ability to give oral reports. He quickly became a regular in the Atlantic Maritimes. Throughout the spring and summer months, Rude was able to wrestle six or seven nights per week. He even teamed with Rene Dupre to capture the Atlantic Grand Prix tag team championship.

Rude was a headliner by 2001. He joined a heel group known as The Carnal Sinners. His cohorts interfered to help him upset former WWF monster Kurgan for the Real Action Wrestling title. Rude enjoyed two more reigns as RAW champion before tension mounted with teammate "Kowboy" Mike Hughes. The Carnal Sinners turned against Rude.

That led to a steel cage showdown between Rude and then-RAW champ Hughes. With the belt up for grabs in the cage, Rude defeated his former friend in a brutal slugfest and became a four-time RAW champion.

Rude cites "Wildman" Gary Williams, Chi Chi Cruz, Joe E. Legend (Just Joe), and Larry Destiny as other tough opponents. Aside from his activities in RAW and AGPW, Rude has also appeared in Border City Wrestling and Puerto Rico's World Wrestling Council.



Bobby Rude encountered a different kind of challenge at this year's Super 8, when he took on Red, a man seven inches shorter and close to 100 pounds lighter than him. Although he dominated the match, he ended up losing to the high-flyer. It was just another learning experience for him as he continues his quest to make it (he hopes) to the WWF.

Rude's most famous appearance in the United States occurred at this year's Super 8. At 6'1" and 232 pounds, Rude towered over his first-round opponent, Red, who was a mere 5'6" and 147 pounds. Rude dominated Red for most of the bout, even hip-tossing the high-flyer violently into the turnbuckles. But Red's aerial attack proved to be too much.

"Red was not big enough to knock down with clotheslines or big moves, so I had to keep him grounded," commented Rude. "His fancy high-flying caught me off-guard. Wrestling someone that small was different for me, but I think we had a good match."

As someone who grew up watch-

ing stars such as Hulk Hogan, The Iron Sheik, Randy Savage, and Rick Steamboat, Rude wants to wrestle full-time in the WWF someday. He has already faced Perry Saturn in a singles match, and Saturn and Dean Malenko in a tag team bout.

"I try to keep in touch with Shane, and continue asking him for advice," said Rude. "And I still send Sean my tapes, which he is kind enough to critique for me. Meanwhile, I'll do my best to keep improving my physique and working as a full-time wrestler."

This young man is displaying the same kind of dedication that made Val Venis a superstar. Perhaps the WWF should brace for a second Rude awakening. □

Q

BUH BUH RAY DUDLEY

A



THE DUDLEY BOYZ are among the most decorated wrestlers of all-time, with six WWF World tag team titles, one WCW World tag team title, and eight ECW World tag team titles to their credit. Can Buh Buh Ray Dudley come close to that record now that he's embarked on a singles career? That remains to be seen, but Dudley got off to an impressive start by defeating Raven for the WWF hardcore title on April 8. It was only his first singles match after The Dudley Boyz team had been split due to the brand extension draft.

While D-Von has undergone the more dramatic transformation, with a new evangelist gimmick on **Smackdown**, Buh Buh Ray has also tried to carve out his own niche. He's done that by reprising his dancing routine from his early days in ECW, and by slightly changing his old catchphrase, which is now "**Buh Buh**, get the tables!" Fans have been reacting very enthusiastically to him as a solo act.

So far, Buh Buh Ray has benefited more from the Dudley Boyz' breakup. Although he has lost the hardcore title for a few moments at a time at various house shows and on one **Raw**, he has been a dominant champion and has already established himself as one of **Raw's** top singles stars. D-Von, on the other hand, will have to work much harder with a radically different persona, although at least he can call Vince McMahon an ally. With 15 tag team titles between them, The Dudley Boyz will always have a very strong bond, despite Buh Buh Ray's exasperation with D-Von's new gimmick.

What goals does Buh Buh Ray have in the meantime? Does he aspire beyond the hardcore title? Contributing Writer Liz Hunter interviewed Buh Buh Ray only three hours before *Backlash*.

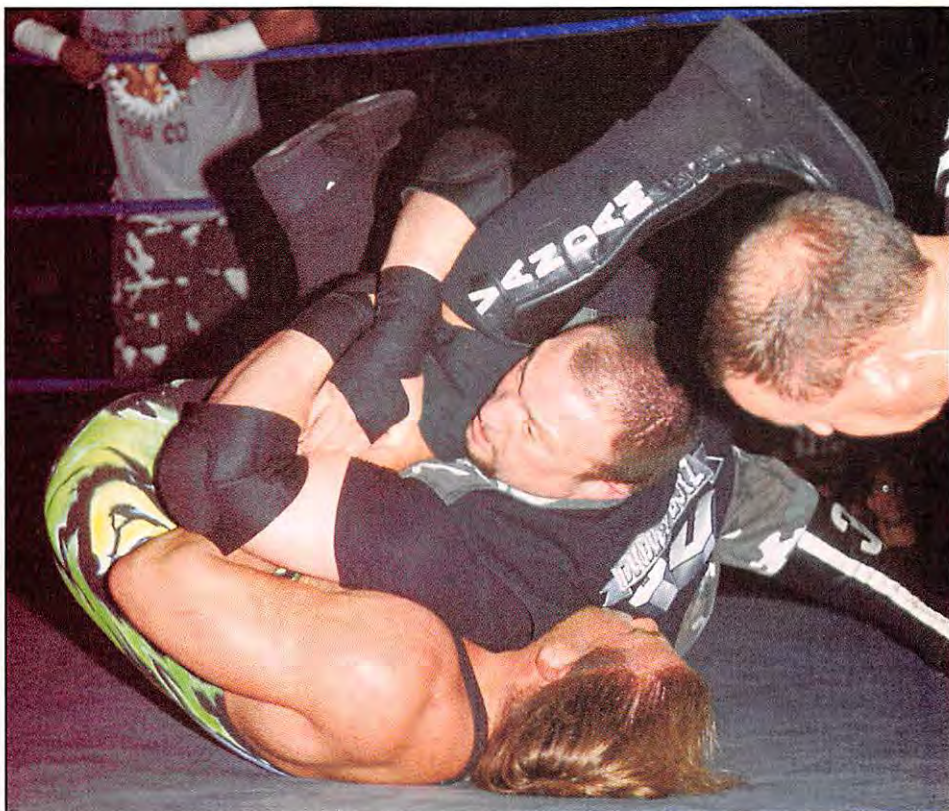
Q: The WWF brand extension meant the end of The Dudley Boyz as we knew them, but it certainly didn't mean the end of you or D-Von. You and D-Von won a total of 15 major tag team titles over a five-year period, an all-time record. Considering your long relationship with D-Von, what was going through your mind in that conference room as you watched the brand extension draft unfold?

A: Oh, so many emotions, Liz. When you've traveled the roads as much as D-Von and I have, and you've seen your careers go from wrestling in front of less than a thousand people in a bingo hall, to wrestling in front of 68,000 fans at WrestleMania X8, that's an incredible ride, let me tell you. And it means even more to have someone at your side during that ride, someone to share that experience with. When you're a singles wrestler, yeah, you can call Mom and send postcards and try to share that experience, but it isn't the same. Only D-Von fully understands that part of my life, and vice versa. D-Von and I are more than brothers. I know that sounds corny, but it's true.

Q: Buh Buh, I've never heard you talk like this. Is this a new, softer side to Buh Buh Ray Dudley?

A: Soft and cuddly like Charmin, huh? That side of me has always been there, and there's the side ...

Q: Don't tell me. There's the disgusting side that gets a thrill out of abusing women by putting them through tables. You've done it to Stacy Keibler, Terri, Trish Stratus, Tori, Mae Young, and many, many others. You're not getting out of this interview until you address this issue, so we may

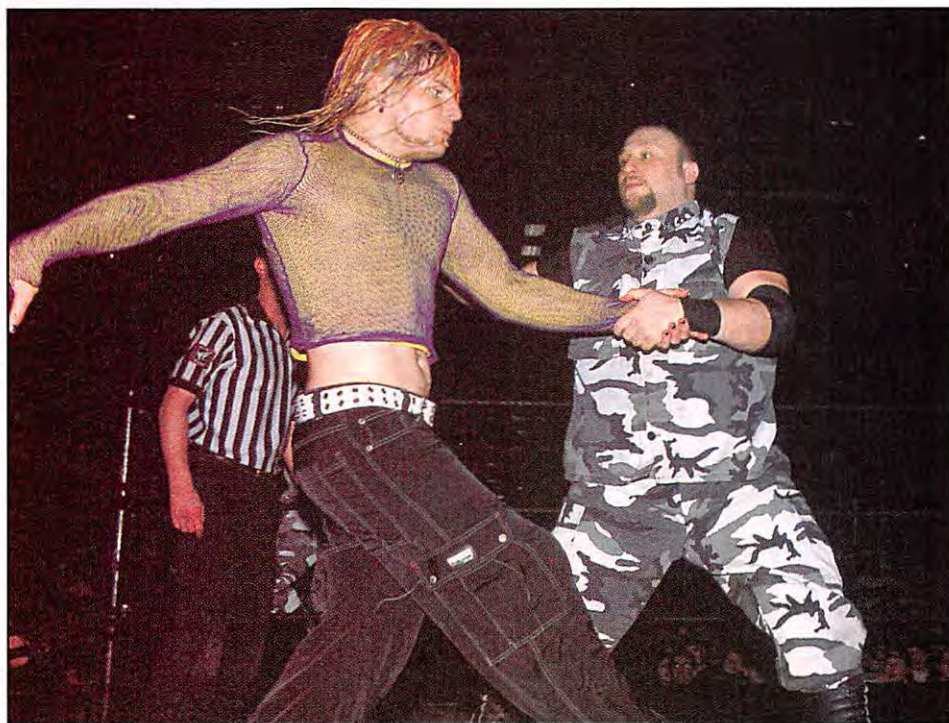


Hardcore champion today, tomorrow ... no one knows. Buh Buh Ray Dudley is excited about defending the hardcore title as long as possible, but perhaps we'll be seeing him in the ring with Rob Van Dam and others on the Intercontinental title level sooner rather than later.

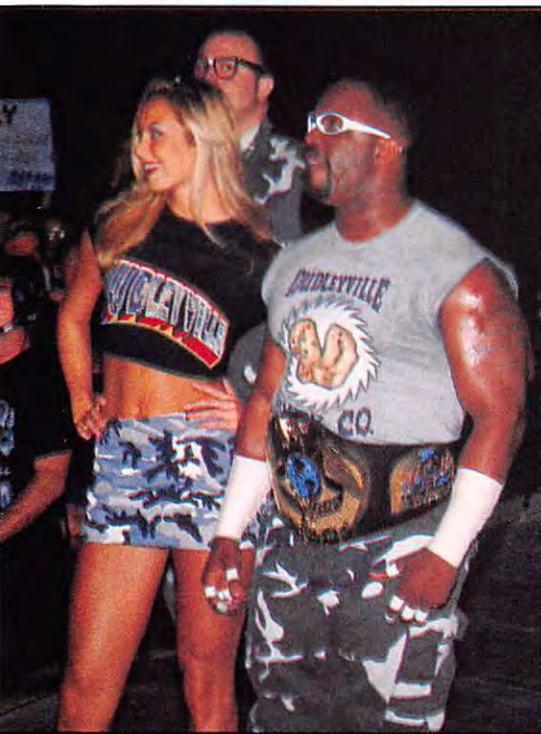
as well get it out of the way right now.

A: What's wrong, Liz? Do you feel left out because I haven't put

you through a table? There's a table over there in the corner. I'd be more than happy to arrange it.



Who would have thought that halfway through 2002, Buh Buh Ray's prospects as a singles wrestler would be more promising than those of the man he is Irish whipping here, Jeff Hardy.



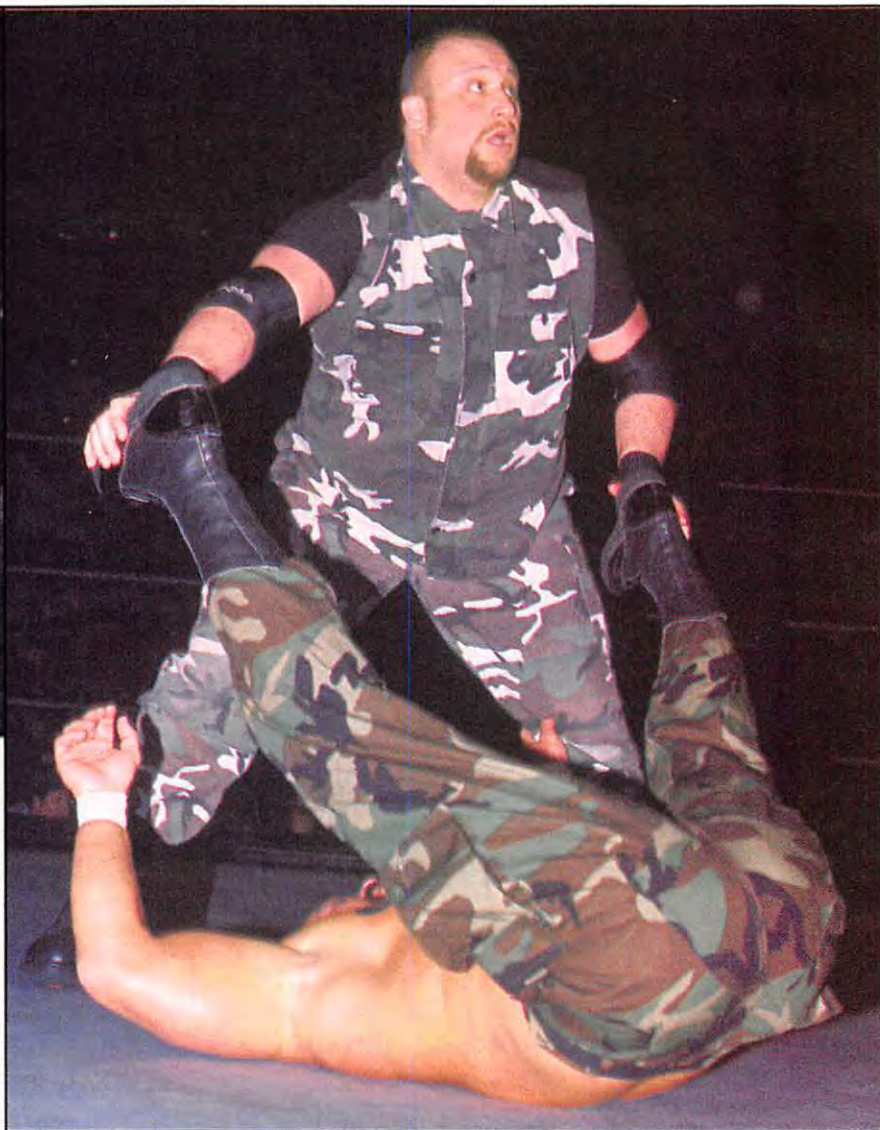
It seems like years ago that Buh Buh Ray, D-Von, and Stacy Keibler were working together as a unit (above). In reality, it's only been a few months. Of course Buh Buh Ray misses hanging out with D-Von, but he's enjoying the challenge of competing on his own. Too bad there are no opportunities to do the "Whaz-zup?!" headbutt when he's on his own (right).

Q: Despicable. What kind of human being ...

A: C'mon, it's not such a big deal. It's like bungee jumping with a crash landing. You're always pushing for equal opportunity, Liz, and I don't discriminate. Man or woman, it doesn't matter, everybody has an equal shot of being put through a table. Trust me, you'd like it.

Q: I see I'm getting nowhere with this line of questioning. Let's get back to what I asked before. You're sitting in the room as the brand extension draft takes place, and you know the breakup of The Dudley Boyz is a real possibility. Emotionally, I know you didn't want to leave D-Von. But in the back of your mind, if the breakup did take place, didn't you consider that an opportunity, to finally embark on a singles career?

A: Ever since I was a kid on Long Island, I've been prepared to deal with any hand that life has dealt me. I'd be proud to retire



and be known only as one-half of The Dudley Boyz tag team. To be remembered in the same category as The Samoans, The Road Warriors, and teams like that would be a tremendous honor. But I'm glad to be working in a company like the WWF, where they aren't afraid to experiment and see what me and D-Von can do on our own. The WWF pushes you to the limits of your potential, and I think that's great. So in the back of my mind, splitting the Dudley Boyz tag team was not such a big deal. It was the idea that me and D-Von would be split completely and work for two different brands. That meant we wouldn't be wrestling in the same cities at the same time, we

wouldn't be traveling together, and we wouldn't be hanging out together backstage. I regretted the breakup of our friendship more than the breakup of our tag team. The fact that our last big match was in Philly was a nice touch, though.

Q: That friendship seems to be tested in more ways than one. Not only are you separated physically, but there also seems to be a separation of philosophy. D-Von has adopted an evangelist gimmick, and he praised Vince McMahon for being a "prophet" and for being his benefactor. I saw him only a few minutes ago, walking around backstage and asking people for donations. What do you think of his new attitude?

A: To be honest with you, it does

rub me the wrong way. I hoped he'd carry on The Dudley Boyz tradition on *Smackdown* by putting people through tables and raising hell. And if he wanted to move away from that a little bit, I would totally understand. But this evangelist con-man thing is so far removed from the D-Von I used to know. He has to remember The Dudley Boyz made him a superstar, just like they made me a superstar. He has completely abandoned it, and it's like he's starting from scratch. What's the deal? Is he that desperate to impress Vince McMahon? So I guess that's my answer. I don't like this "Brother D-Von" thing.

Q: Have you talked to him about it?

A: I haven't really had a chance. I've been so busy with getting started on *Raw* and defending my hardcore title. We're supposed to do a little reunion thing on *Heat* in a couple of hours, so maybe I'll ask him about it then.

Q: Let's talk about your hardcore title win. You beat Raven on *Raw*, on the first night of the brand extension. Describe that victory and how it compares to all of your tag team title wins.

A: What made that extra special was the fact that I beat Raven. You have to remember that five years ago, Raven was the ECW champion, and me and D-Von were just hitting our stride in the tag team division. Five years ago, if someone had told me that I would beat Raven for a championship someday, I would've been awestruck. The first wins are the most memorable, like our first ECW tag team title,

our first WWF tag team title, and my first hardcore title.

Q: Didn't you forget your WCW tag team title?

A: Hasn't everybody else?

Q: Good point. You were involved in an interesting segment recently where Raven beat you for the hardcore title, Tommy Dreamer beat him, Steven Richards ran out and pinned Dreamer for the belt, and you immediately regained the belt from Richards. What is your take on that, considering the whole ECW connection there?

A: I wish we could play off that ECW connection even more. My proudest moment in the WWF wasn't when I did something special, or me and D-Von did something special. It was that night in Atlanta, when the old ECW roster reunited and walked through the crowd together with Paul [Heyman]. It almost brought tears to my eyes. We all made it to the big

time, in the WWF. On top of that, we did it in Atlanta, the home of WCW. That night couldn't have been more dramatic.

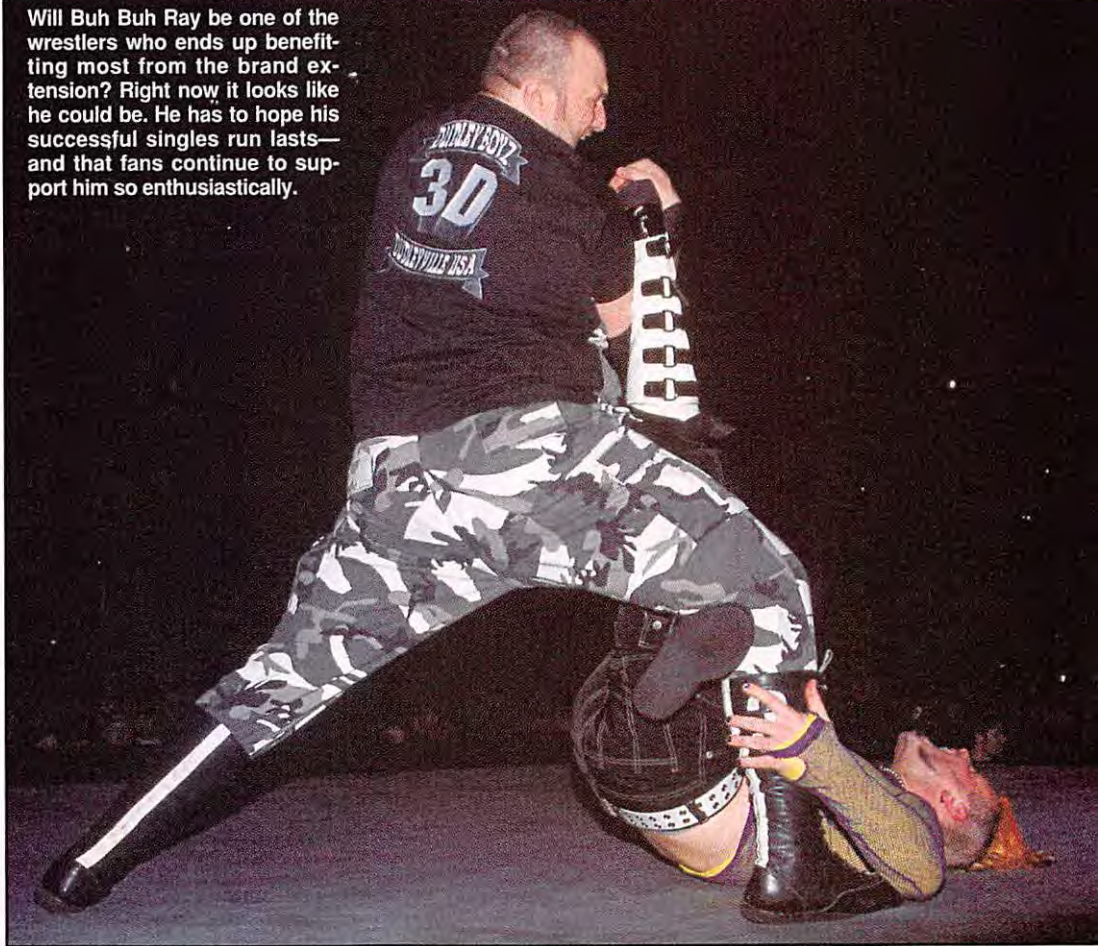
Q: I know you enjoy being hardcore champion, but do you have aspirations beyond this point?

A: I am totally focused on keeping the hardcore title as long as possible, and as far as I'm concerned, putting people through tables without getting disqualified is a great way to make a living. But I will take advantage of any and all opportunities that come my way.

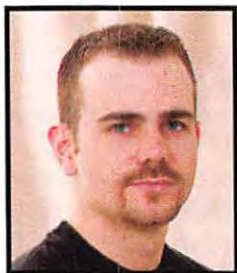
Q: Final question: Why did you bring back the dancing?

A: Because I can do it, mama. I stopped doing it with D-Von because I'm a better dancer, and I didn't want to show him up. We can hook up later, Liz, and cut a rug or just plain get funky, whatever you want. And if you're nice, I'll put you through a table. □

Will Buh Buh Ray be one of the wrestlers who ends up benefiting most from the brand extension? Right now it looks like he could be. He has to hope his successful singles run lasts—and that fans continue to support him so enthusiastically.



from **Bell** to **Bell**



By Mike Quackenbush



About a month before he made his surprise return to *Raw* and initiated a feud with Rob Van Dam, Eddie Guerrero was tying up Mike Quackenbush in a painful abdominal stretch in an Armory in Massachusetts. Wrestling Guerrero was definitely a career highlight for Quackenbush. He had admired Guerrero's work for years.

[Editor's note: Mike Quackenbush, who has held numerous titles throughout the Northeast and elsewhere, files reports on the life of a young independent wrestler seeking to make an impact on the business. In this issue, he writes about wrestling Eddie Guerrero, a man he has admired from afar for so long, for the first time and how he has even more respect for him now than he ever had.]

IN 1995, WHILE I was busy cutting my teeth in the Pittsburgh area independents, national promotions in the United States were offering up what I felt were some pretty dull matches. The headlining match for a few WCW pay-per-views at the time was Hulk Hogan vs. Vader, while the WWF was serving up Diesel vs. Sid Vicious. As a light heavyweight, these kind of matches—two super heavyweights colliding in a slow-paced match—don't hold much appeal for me. Obviously, this put me in a distinct minority, since both the WWF and the WCW were making millions in pay-per-view revenue by putting that type of match in the main-event position at the time.

Before the escalation of the Monday night wars gave the wrestling world a plethora of exciting, competitive matches, the American scene had grown pretty stale in my eyes. During the summer of 1995, a friend slipped me a tape of an ECW show at a time when ECW was not available on television in my hometown. Eager for some variety in my wrestling diet, I raced to the nearest VCR to check out the tape.

Compiled on one cassette were a handful of encounters between two men I had seen briefly in New Japan Pro

Wrestling, Dean Malenko and Eddie Guerrero. Now they were plying their trade in ECW, and my gut instinct was that their style of wrestling wouldn't appeal to the tastes of the wild, bloodthirsty fans who gathered regularly at the ECW Arena. Men like Sabu and Tasmaniac (Tazz) had made flying chairs and smashed tables a regular part of the action, and fans loved it. The Malenko-Guerrero bouts were scientific masterpieces, and much to my surprise, the crowds embraced them and their style with open arms.

The work of two men changed my opinion of American wrestling at the time. No longer was I bored with the scene. I was inspired and invigorated. The matches they were having reminded me of what I aspired to be, reminded me of what I love most about pro wrestling. Long-time readers of this column know that I have used this space to rave about these matches on a few occasions in the past, and I've always held that the Malenko-Guerrero classics were as good as any of the world's greatest bouts from any period in wrestling history.

As you probably know, Malenko and Guerrero eventually departed ECW for WCW, and later, as The Radicals (with Chris Benoit and Perry Saturn), made the jump to the World Wrestling Federation. But after a pretty successful run that lasted almost two years, Guerrero was fired from the WWF last November. The company had paid for him to go to rehab for his substance abuse problem, and soon after he got out, he was arrested on drunk driving charges near his home in Florida. He essentially left the WWF no choice but to release him. It was then that he realized he was an alcoholic and that he needed help—and got it.

Before the WWF was convinced he was on the road to recovery and decided to give him another chance this spring, Guerrero returned to New Japan for a stint, and also graced the independent circuit for a short spell. It was there that Eddie and I crossed paths.

The first few times a promoter named



Although it looks here as if Quackenbush is about to subdue Guerrero with a sleeper, he didn't. Guerrero beat him with a frog splash. The fact that he lost didn't bother Quack at all. He gained some valuable experience and got to be around a man who is doing an admirable job of putting his life back together.

Mike Sparta had called me to wrestle in New England, the timing was just not right. His World Wrestling Alliance kept a schedule that would not match up with my own, and several attempts to book me in Boston failed to work out. Eventually, Sparta called me with information that would prompt me to change my schedule in whatever way necessary to fit in a trip to Massachusetts. Sparta had secured the services of Eddie Guerrero for a few nights, and I was given the chance to lock up with him.

Guerrero and I share a little bit of common ground. We're both Americans who have learned the Lucha Libre style, and both of us have had career highlights facing El Hijo del Santo (I faced Santo on an independent card in Pennsylvania in April 2000; Guerrero's famed match was on AAA's huge When Worlds Collide pay-per-view in 1994). The differences between us, though, were obvious not only to me, but to the crowd that saw us battle in Lynn, Massachusetts. Guerrero is a world-class wrestler capable of beating the best in the world on any given night. The same cannot be said of me.

I hung with Guerrero as best I could that night, but the result was predictable. It was Eddie getting the win, via frog splash, in about 12 minutes. I am not the

least bit embarrassed by the result. I'm pleased that I had the chance to test myself against one of the true greats in the business, a man whom I both respect and admire. If there was ever a loss of which I could be proud, it was this one to Eddie Guerrero.

Like he had done years before through the wonder of videotape, Guerrero inspired me. That night in Lynn, I got to see first-hand a man who was beating his personal demons and fighting to get his life back in order. In a cramped changing area backstage at a National Guard Armory, the dedication and perseverance of Eddie Guerrero were prominently displayed for anyone who bothered to take notice. Whatever reasons had led to his departure from the WWF in 2001 were not going to keep Guerrero out of the spotlight.

As hard-fought as his matches with Rob Van Dam might be, Guerrero faced down his most difficult opponent before making his triumphant return to WWF action. In Guerrero, I see more than just a fantastic wrestler and a class act. I see a man who has worked day and night to get his life back on track and succeeded, and it makes me admire him all the more. I was a fan of Eddie Guerrero in 1995, and now, for a new set of reasons, I'm a fan of him once again. □

Spot Light N...

LANCE STORM

IF WE COULD be serious for a moment, Lance Storm might be the most underappreciated wrestler in the business.

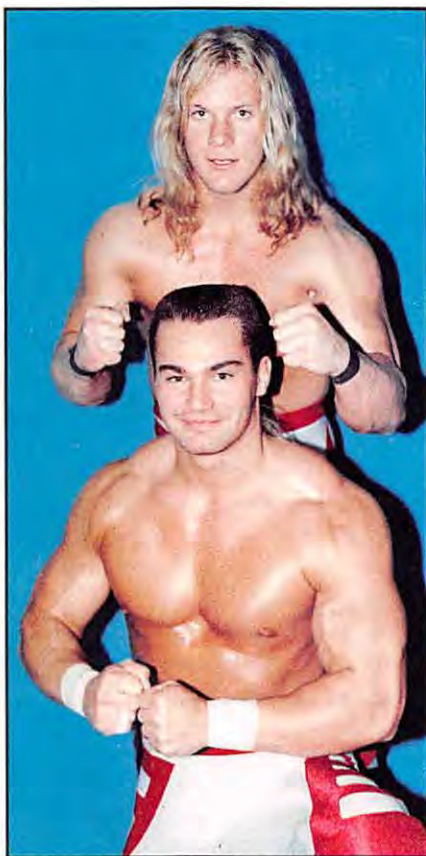
Seriously.

For much of 2002, Storm has been stuck in a rut in the WWF. The former Intercontinental champion was the 33rd pick in the recent brand extension draft, which means he suffered the indignity of having his name selected in the random lottery portion of the historic event. And this was after he had to work as a janitor to get his job back following the Alliance loss at last year's Survivor Series! In the opinion of many observers, though, Storm's fortunes are due to change for the better. This was a man who held three titles at the same time in WCW two years ago!

Storm was born on April 3, 1969, in Sarnia, Ontario, and grew up in North Bay, Ontario. Storm competed in basketball and track and field during high school, but his true passion was volleyball. During this time, Storm also took an interest in weightlifting and credits his father with instilling in him proper weight training habits. Upon graduation from West Ferris Secondary, he enrolled at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. The 205-pound college freshman was able to bench 300 pounds!

Storm played volleyball for a year and a half in college, but once he stopped playing on the collegiate level, he lost interest in school and decided to try his hand at wrestling.

Storm realized he was small by



March 1994: Chris Jericho looks much younger here, but Lance Storm still looks pretty close to the same. This picture was taken soon after both arrived in Jim Cornette's Smoky Mountain Wrestling as The Thrillseekers. Maybe we'll see them re-form that team in the WWF someday.

wrestling standards at the time, but he became interested in the Hart Brothers Pro Wrestling Camp in Calgary when he noticed the number of superb smaller wrestlers who got their start there (including Bret and Owen Hart, Brian

Pillman, Chris Benoit, and The Dynamite Kid).

In June 1990, Storm flew to Calgary. On his first day at the camp, he met a young man named Chris Jericho and formed a friendship that remains strong today. Storm trained for eight weeks before getting his first match, a bout against Jericho for the Canadian Wrestling Connection in Ponoka, Alberta. The match went to a 15-minute draw. In the main event of the same card, Storm won a Royal Rumble-style battle royal. He was off to a very respectable start.

Storm formed a team with Jericho known as Sudden Impact, and the team competed in a number of Canadian independent promotions throughout 1990 and 1991. In October 1991, Storm and Jericho did a two-week tour for Japan's FMW promotion that garnered them some international attention. By early-1992, however, the two men had decided to part ways and try their hands as singles competitors.

In May 1993, Storm was recruited for a two-week tour of Lebanon, of all places. While the tour was a commercial disaster, Storm did get to meet veterans Mando and Chavo Guerrero Sr., both of whom offered him valuable pointers and advice.

Later that year, Storm was offered a six-month engagement in Europe and started with Otto Wanz' Catch Wrestling Association in Germany. On July 24, 1993, he defeated Hiroyoshi Yamamoto to win the CWA junior heavyweight





April 1997: We've seen Lance Storm vs. Rob Van Dam on WWF TV, but did you know that they wrestled each other at the first ECW pay-per-view, *Barely Legal*? RVD got the pin in a very entertaining undercard match.

title, his first major championship.

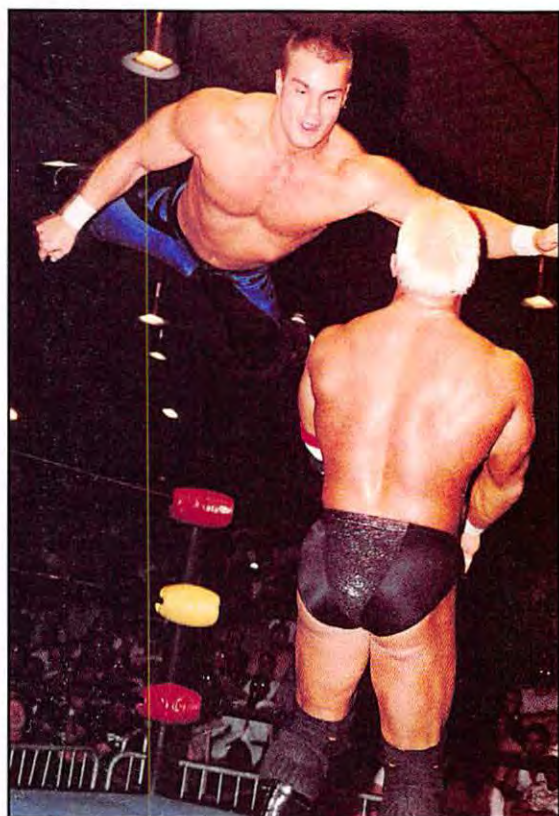
While there, Storm sent a highlight reel to Jim Cornette, who was promoting Smoky Mountain Wrestling in the United States at the time. After a few months overseas, Storm returned home on a brief vacation, only to injure his knee in a match. That injury forced him to miss the remainder of his European tour.

By this time, Cornette had viewed the tape and was trying to reach Storm, not knowing he had returned to Canada. Jericho had already arrived in SMW and showed Cornette old tapes of Sudden Impact. Being a huge proponent of tag team wrestling, Cornette decided to reunite the team, and after a prolonged game of phone tag with "The Louisville Lip," Storm signed with a U.S.-based promotion for the first time.

In February 1994, Storm and Jericho became The Thrillseekers, one of the most popular teams in Smoky Mountain history. Around this time, SMW had negotiated a working arrangement with the WWF, and The Thrillseekers generated a buzz as a team that could have earned them a long look by WWF talent scouts. However, SMW folded before that ever took place.

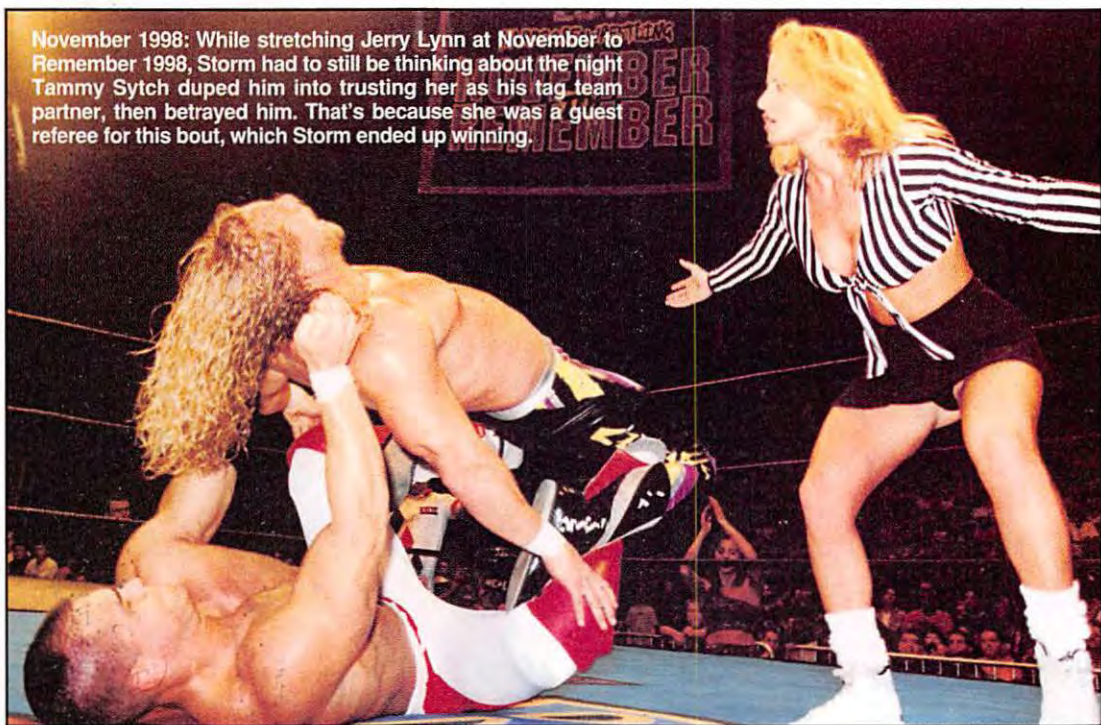
In 1995, Storm returned to Canada and hooked up with the CWA again. It was in that promotion that he feuded with Dave "Fit" Finlay, a man

he considers one of his toughest opponents. Meanwhile, Jericho jumped to WAR in Japan. In December 1995, Jericho called Storm and helped him get a spot in that Far East promotion. Storm's no-frills style and strong technical skills earned him a great deal



April 1998: Storm's first major feud in ECW was with Chris Candido. What made this feud so intriguing was that it took place while the two of them held the ECW tag team championship together. Well, at least the first phase of it did.

of respect in the Orient. He competed for WAR for three years, twice winning the junior tag title with Yuji Yasuraoka and once capturing the six-man tag title.



November 1998: While stretching Jerry Lynn at November to Remember 1998, Storm had to still be thinking about the night Tammy Sytch duped him into trusting her as his tag team partner, then betrayed him. That's because she was a guest referee for this bout, which Storm ended up winning.



April 2000: Some outstanding tag teams passed through ECW during its nine-year existence, and The Impact Players—Storm and Justin Credible—were certainly one of them. They're pictured here with Dawn Marie, who just recently made her WWF debut.

In February 1997, Storm contacted Paul Heyman and started competing for ECW. In his first major role, Storm became an associate member of Shane Douglas' Triple Threat. On December 6, 1997, Storm and Chris Candido defeated Doug Furnas and Phil Lafon and Mahoney and Axl Rotten in a three-way dance to win the ECW tag belts. Although he was Candido's partner, Storm was treated as a junior member of the team—a fraternity pledge, if you will—which caused friction in The Triple Threat. That be-

came worse when Tammy "Sunny" Sytch entered the picture and seemed to be smitten with Storm. Candido and Storm managed to hold on to the tag straps for almost seven months despite carrying on their own feud.

Once Candido and Storm dropped the belts to Rob Van Dam and Sabu, their rivalry erupted into a full-blown feud. Storm announced he would team with a mystery partner to face Candido and Bam Bam Bigelow. To everyone's surprise, that partner turned out to be Sytch. However, *that* turned out to be a swerve, as Sytch double-crossed Storm and cost him the match.

He was humiliated, but he knew exactly how to get his revenge.

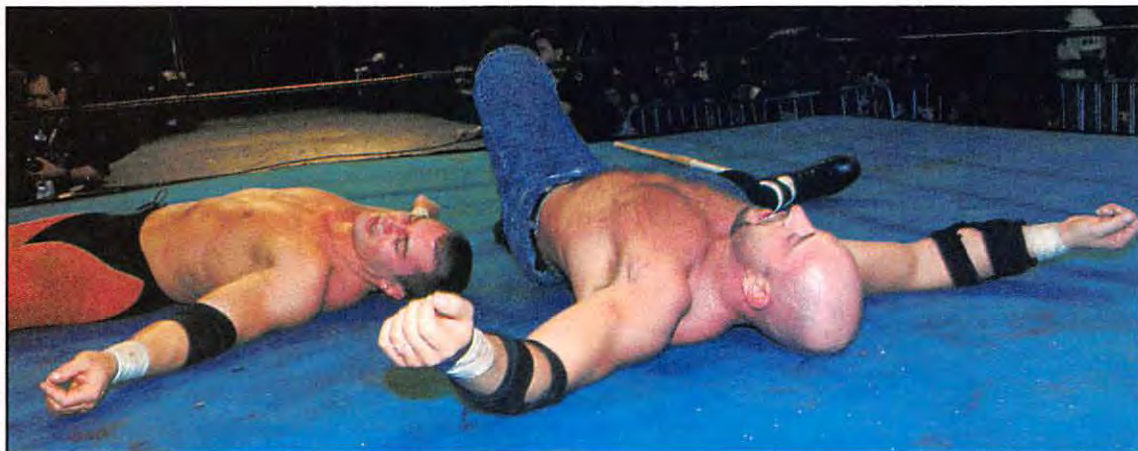
On August 28, 1998, Storm introduced his new valet, the beautiful Dawn Marie. Storm formed an alliance with Justin Credible, and together with Dawn Marie and manager Jason, they formed The Impact Players. Credible and Storm became one of the top teams in ECW, and on January 9, 2000, they beat Raven



April 2000: You didn't realize Storm had issues with Jazz in the past, did you? They wrestled each other in mixed tag team competition in ECW a few times, including on the very night on which The Impact Players split up at the ECW Arena.

and Tommy Dreamer to win the tag title.

The Impact Players dropped the belts to Dreamer and Masato Tanaka on February 26, 2000, but regained them in a three-way dance with Dreamer and Tanaka and Raven and Mike Awesome on March 12. But time was running out for The Impact Players, for Credible upset Dreamer for the ECW World title on April 22. Earlier that night, Storm left the ECW Arena to get treated for an injury at a Philadelphia hospital. Little did he know that Credible was planning to vacate the



May 2000: Physically and emotionally exhausted, Credible and Storm lay on the mat during their grueling match for Justin's ECW World title at Hardcore Heaven. Credible beat Storm by pinfall in the Calgary native's final ECW match before he joined WCW.



July 2000: Showing just how good a technical wrestler he is, Storm uses a perfectly executed bridge to pin Big Vito for the WCW hardcore title. This happened six days after he won the WCW U.S. title and seven days before he captured the WCW cruiserweight belt. He's the only man ever to hold three WCW titles simultaneously.

tag title to focus on the World heavy-weight championship. Credible dominated Storm in a short feud, as Storm was preparing to jump to WCW, anyway.

Storm made an immediate and strong impact in WCW as the anti-American from Calgary ... Alberta ... Canada. On July 18, 2000, Storm won the U.S. title

after beating Buff Bagwell, former associate Shane Douglas, and Mike Awesome in a tournament. To the dismay of the fans, he unofficially rechristened the strap the Canadian heavy-weight championship. The following week, Storm beat Big Vito to win the hardcore title, and one week later, Storm completed the trifecta by beating Chavo Guerrero Jr. for the cruiserweight title.

Storm later awarded the hardcore title to Carl Oulette and the cruiserweight title to Elix Skipper, the newest members of Team Canada, a group of which Storm was the leader.

In title changes never acknowledged on TV, Storm dropped the U.S. title to Terry Funk on September 22, 2000, but regained the belt the following day. Storm lost the belt to Gen. Rection (Hugh Morrus) on October 29, but regained

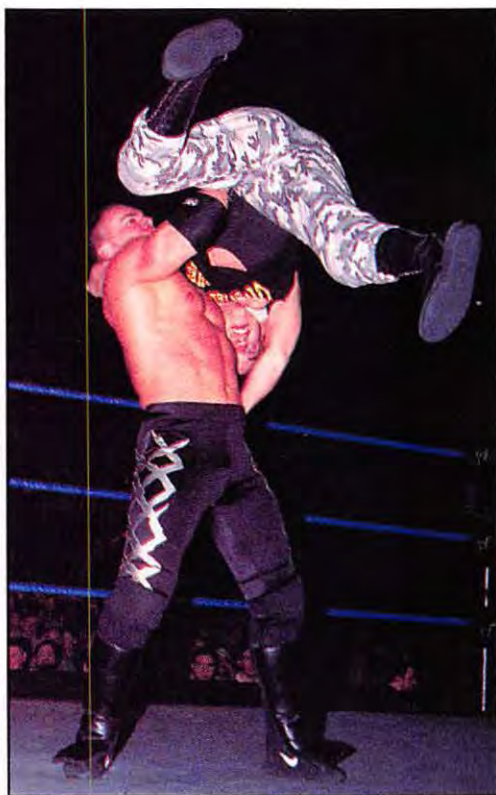
the title and acquired the valet services of Major Gunns, one of Rection's associates in the Misfits In Action clique, on November 10.

On May 28, 2001, two months after the McMahon family bought WCW, Storm became the first WCW wrestler to appear on WWF TV, doing a surprise run-in through the crowd on *Raw*. His WWF debut took place in Calgary to a huge pop. In his first televised WWF match, Storm teamed with Awesome to face Kane and Jericho, and on July 23, Storm beat Albert to win the WWF Intercontinental title. Unfortunately, his reign was short-lived; he dropped the belt to Edge a month later at SummerSlam.

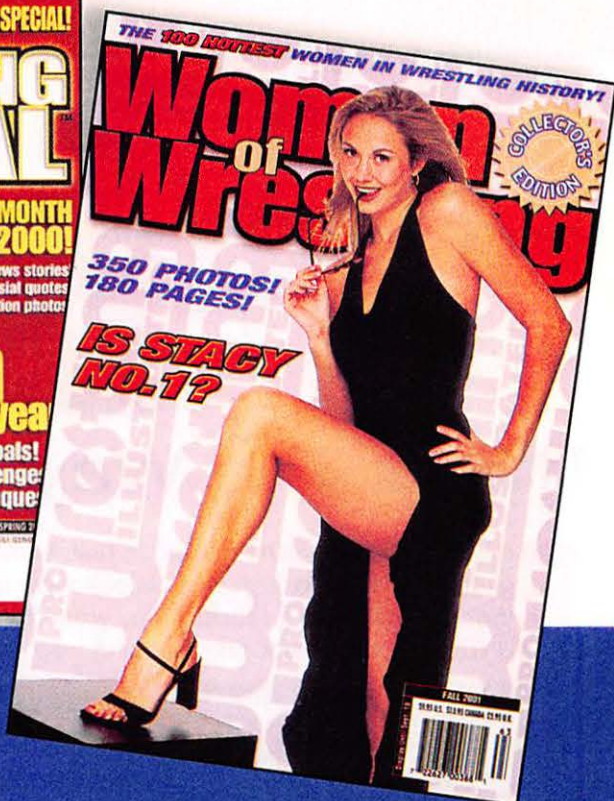
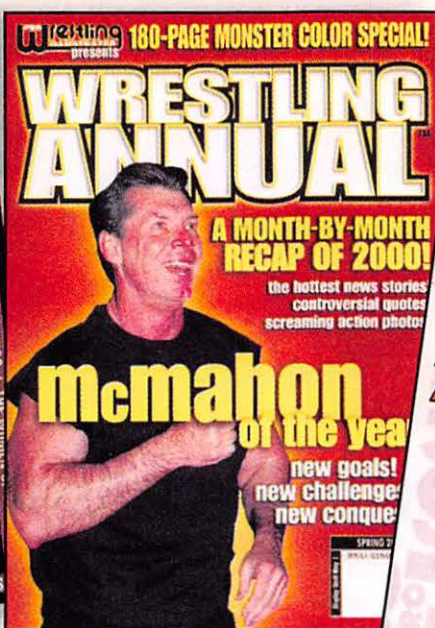
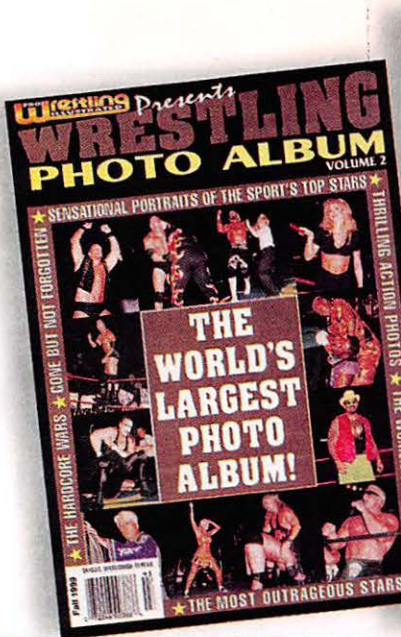
Since the Alliance was destroyed at last year's Survivor Series, Storm hasn't been given a chance to accomplish much, though his interference did help Jericho retain the undisputed WWF World title a few times in early-2002. Storm was drafted by Vince McMahon and is now a member of the *Smackdown* roster. Could that long-awaited WWF push finally be in the works? □



September 2001: First Dawn Marie, then Ivory. What is it with Storm and beautiful women in this business? Actually, the professional relationship he had with Ivory lasted but a few weeks. He and Dawn were a team for a lot longer.



January 2002: Storm (shown suplexing Spike Dudley) is hoping to be one of the WWF mid-carders who gets a legitimate chance to show what he can do now that the promotion has split in two. He's on the *Smackdown* team.



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OUR WWF DRAFT!

This Is The Way It Should Have Been!

THE WWF'S DECISION to split in half, with *Raw* under Ric Flair's charge and *Smackdown* under Vince McMahon's leadership, wasn't made hastily. No, a lot of thought and planning went into it.

The success or failure of the split will not only affect the WWF's future, it will also go a long way toward determining what's to come for the rest of the wrestling community.

The Rock and The Undertaker were the first two men selected in the real WWF brand extension draft back in March. Neither was in the top two of our WWF draft. Who was? Turn the page and find out.

Knowing this, the WWF's Board of Directors had to ensure that the split was carried out with an even hand. If the fans felt that either *Raw* or *Smackdown* was getting a major advantage out of the starting gate, the brand extension (as it has been called) would have been doomed. That's why the Board decreed that a draft would be held to determine the respective rosters of the two brands. If Flair and McMahon were picking their own wrestlers from the WWF's current crop of talent, the only people they'd be able to blame for failure would be themselves.

The draft, though, wasn't as exciting as it could have been. Triple-H, the undisputed WWF World champion at the time, was taken off the board. So were "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin and Chris Jericho. The NWO (for reasons never made clear) and Billy Gunn and Chuck Palumbo (because they were the World tag team champions) were drafted as units. Jazz, the women's champion, also had draft immunity. And wrestlers who held championships were allowed to retain their belts, no matter which side drafted them.

It shouldn't have been that way. Everyone should have been eligible for the draft, and no group or tag team should have been allowed to be drafted as a whole. In the end, the draft's nonsensical rules hurt the overall con-



Rob Van Dam is one rising superstar who fared well in the real WWF draft, getting picked fourth, just after the collective NWO. How early will this young veteran get drafted by our experts?

cept. Not only did they take away from some of the anticipation surrounding the draft, they also created an unbalance. After the first 20 draft picks were chosen, *Smackdown* was outfitted with 11 wrestlers, and *Raw* with 12. *Smackdown* captured the tag team and hardcore titles by drafting Billy and Chuck and Maven, respectively (although Maven lost the hardcore title to *Raw*'s Raven before the split went into effect), while *Raw* secured the Intercontinental and European championships by drafting Rob Van Dam and William Regal.

How dull.

So we're doing it over—the right away. First of all, if you're under WWF contract, you're draftable. Also, there are no group draft picks. Everyone gets drafted as an individual or doesn't get drafted at all. And except for undisputed World champion Triple-H and women's champion Jazz, we've stripped all champions of their titles. For the sake of argument, *Raw* would get the Intercontinental title, while *Smackdown* would receive the European championship.

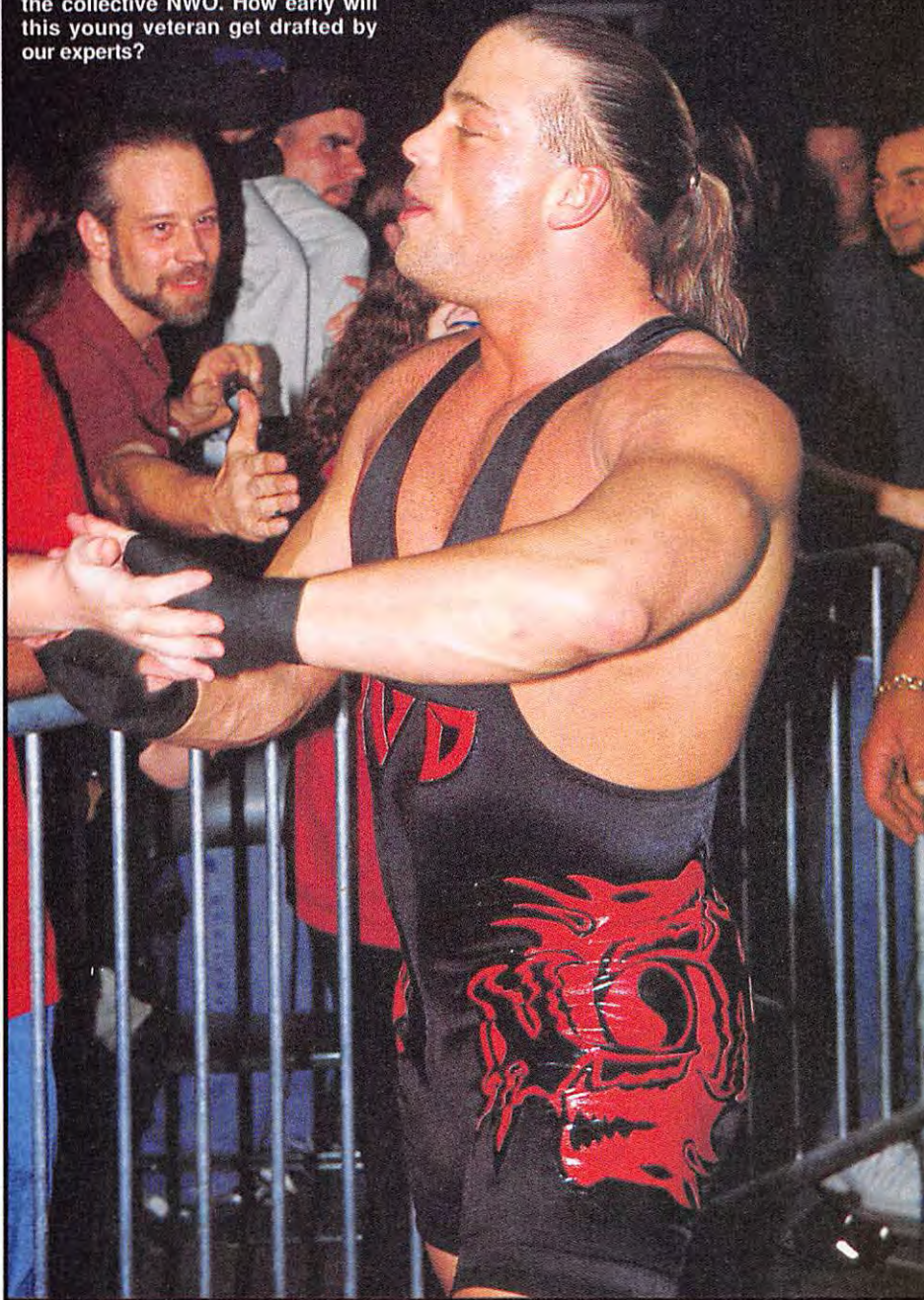
After the draft, an impartial judge would determine which side should get the hardcore title and which side should receive the cruiserweight title, based on which title would be the better fit for which brand's talent roster. The brands would be able to fill the vacancies in any way they saw fit, and the Intercontinental champion would become the *Raw* champion, while the European champion would become the *Smackdown* champion. The World heavyweight, World tag team, and women's championship would be contested on both programs.

To see how the draft would really play out given these rule changes, THE WRESTLER called on its entire of staff of senior writers and editors. Teams were formed, with Publisher Stu Saks acting as impartial referee. Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker headed up *Raw*'s draft team, which also included Senior Writers Frank

Krewda and Will Welsh. Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz led Senior Writers Harry Burkett and Dan Murphy into battle for the *Smackdown* brand. By the flip of a coin, Team *Raw* won the right to make the first selection.

Over the next 12 pages, we'll break down both teams' top 10 draft picks, and one member of each team will explain the methodology behind every selection.

This is the way that draft *should* have played out. Sit back and enjoy.

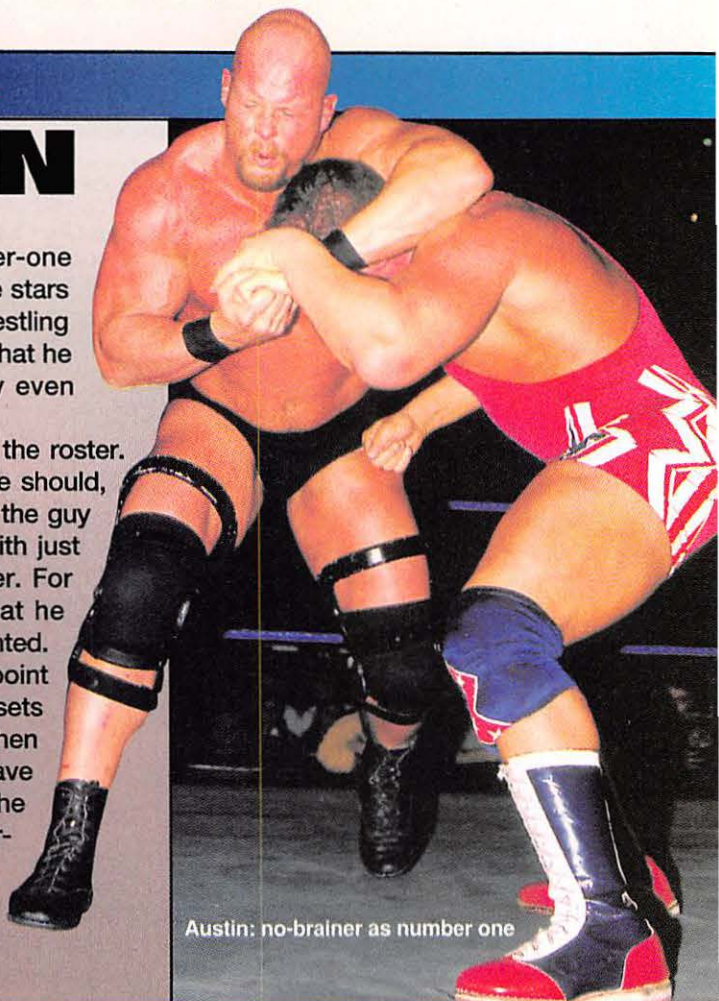


1 RAW'S FIRST PICK: STEVE AUSTIN

Dave Lenker: "How can Austin *not* be the number-one pick in the draft? He's easily one of the sport's top five stars of all-time, and unlike The Rock, he's committed to wrestling full-time for the foreseeable future. There's no reason that he can't go another three or four years—and probably even longer than that."

"Austin also brings a strong sense of leadership to the roster. Over the course of his career, he's given more than he should, and he hasn't always been commended for that. Plus, the guy just doesn't have bad matches. He can be in there with just about anyone and turn the match into a show-stealer. For some reason, he doesn't always get the respect that he deserves. I think people have started to take him for granted."

"I don't think he necessarily needs to be the focal point of every major storyline, but the crowd eruption that sets off when the glass breaks is undeniable. Other than when he turned heel and they were supposed to, the fans have never turned against him either, like they have with The Rock from time to time. They're too in tune with his personality. They believe he's one of them, and that if he wasn't in the ring wrestling, he'd be in the stands drinking beer and giving the wrestlers hell. That's what makes him so valuable."



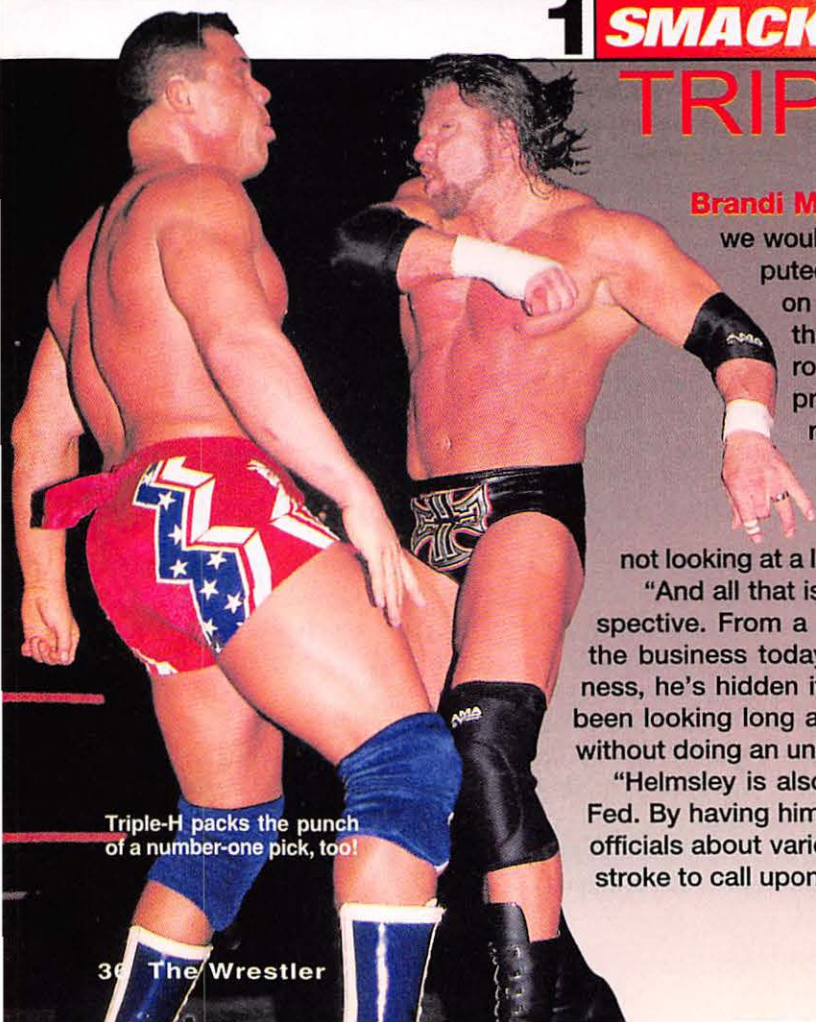
Austin: no-brainer as number one

1 SMACKDOWN'S FIRST PICK: TRIPLE-H

Brandi Mankiewicz: "This worked out well for us, because we would have taken Triple-H first anyway. He's the undisputed WWF World champion, and though he'll appear on both *Raw* and *Smackdown* while he holds that belt, the fact that he's officially part of the *Smackdown* roster adds a little luster to our side of the yard. His presence on *Raw* would also help us increase and retain an audience, since fans who watch *Raw* will also want to keep up with his antics on *Smackdown*. One other thing that's worth mentioning is that wrestling is pretty much his life. He's not looking at a lot of outside projects."

"And all that is only why we chose Triple-H from a business perspective. From a pure wrestling standpoint, Triple-H is the best in the business today. He's the complete package. If he has a weakness, he's hidden it pretty well, because we can't find it—and we've been looking long and hard. We wouldn't make a pick this important without doing an unbelievable amount of research."

"Helmsley is also one of the most important power brokers in the Fed. By having him on *Smackdown*, we could use him to lobby WWF officials about various issues. It's nice having someone with so much stroke to call upon every now and then."



Triple-H packs the punch of a number-one pick, too!

2 RAW'S SECOND PICK: ROB VAN DAM

Frank Krewda: "Van Dam has been one of my favorite wrestlers to watch for years now, going all the way back to his ECW days. His style is unlike anything else I've ever seen—and there have been plenty of imitators. None of them, however, has completely captured what RVD does in the ring. His daredevil maneuvers and frenzied pace make his matches downright breathtaking at times."

"As for why we're taking him this high in the draft, above so many other notables, well, he's in the sport for the long haul, too. Though he's dabbled in acting now and then, he's most at home when he's in the ring performing. And despite the lack of a real, solid, main-event-level push, he's one of the Federation's most popular wrestlers. You can't buy talent like that."

"The only thing worrisome about Van Dam is whether or not an outfit structured like the WWF—with its short matches and heavy dependence on promos—can keep his attention. After a number of years in the WWF, he might become vulnerable to walking through his matches just because he's lost his inspiration. It is a minor concern that we have."

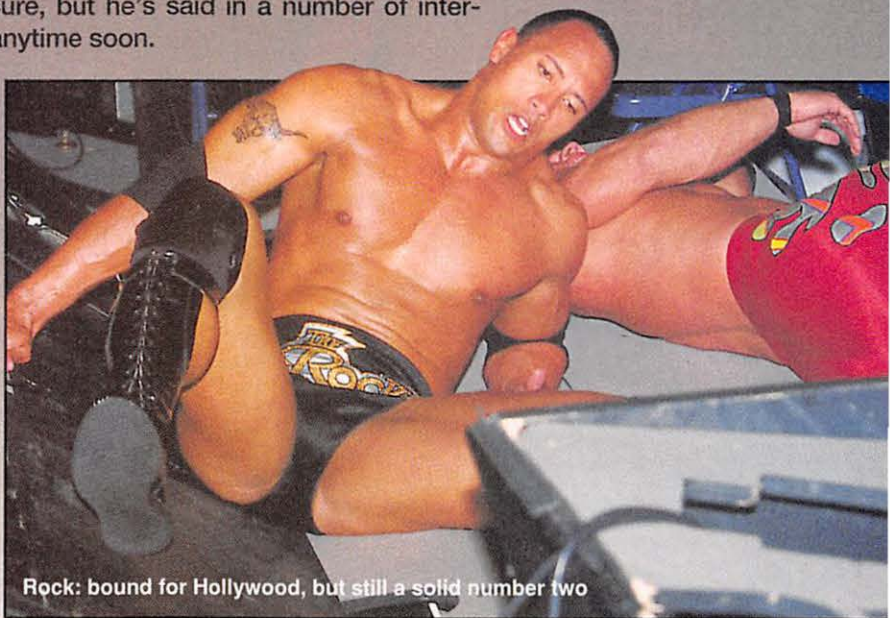
Team Raw could lift RVD to the main-event level quickly!

2 SMACKDOWN'S SECOND PICK: THE ROCK

Harry Burkett: "Why The Rock at this spot? Why not? He's the most famous wrestler on the entire WWF roster, and if we didn't grab him now, we're not too sure he'd be there on the next go-around. His Hollywood career is a major concern, sure, but he's said in a number of interviews that he's not ready to leave the WWF anytime soon."

"Even if Rock wrestles on a part-time basis, it's better than not having him at all. In fact, it'd be almost ludicrous to try to do business without him. That's how big of a draw he is. Hardcore fans love the guy, and some of the fringe fans seem to come out of the woodwork only when he's being featured. That's how much power he has to make or break a promotion, or in this case, a brand."

"We'd be sure to let him tackle Hollywood commitments, because if we didn't, he'd quickly develop an attitude, and that's the last thing we want from our most visible performer. Rock's a professional, though, and we don't see any reason why we couldn't work together amicably so that both he and we achieved our desired goals."



Rock: bound for Hollywood, but still a solid number two

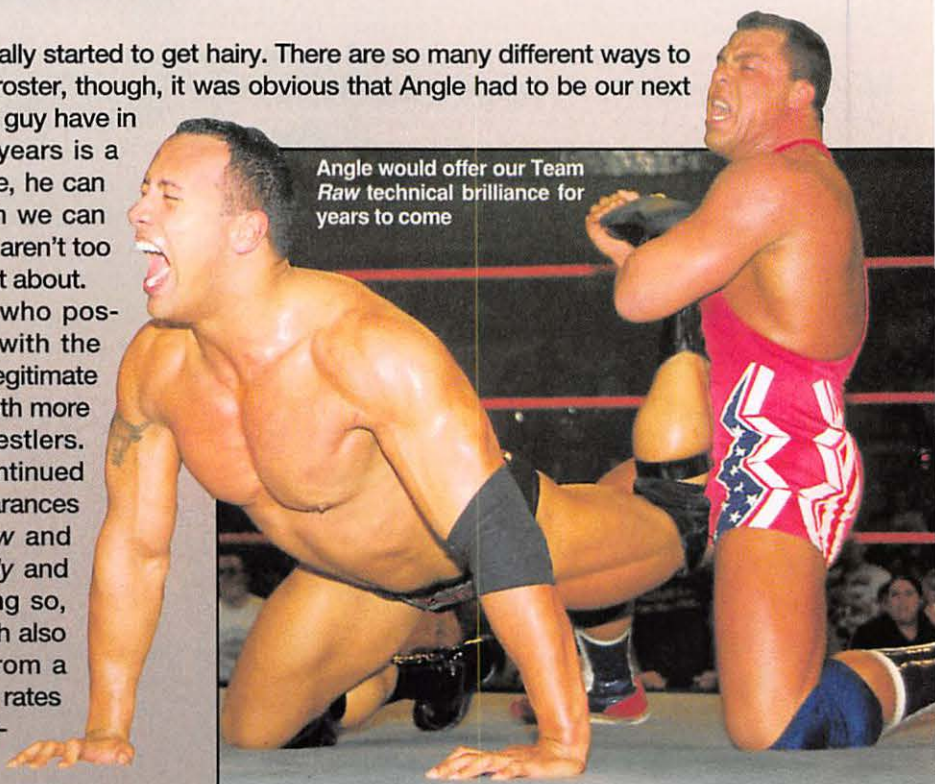
3 RAW'S THIRD PICK:

KURT ANGLE

Will Welsh: "With this pick, things really started to get hairy. There are so many different ways to go. Looking at the names still on the roster, though, it was obvious that Angle had to be our next pick. How many more years does this guy have in the sport? At least 10. Even more years is a strong possibility. That being the case, he can become a cornerstone around which we can build the rest of the brand—and there aren't too many wrestlers whom you can say that about."

"Angle also gives us a wrestler who possesses a Rock-like ability to deal with the mainstream media. Because he's a legitimate Olympic gold medalist, he's treated with more respect than most professional wrestlers. That's important for the brand's continued success. If he can make regular appearances on programs like *The Tonight Show* and *Today* and *Live With Regis And Kelly* and come off as a gentleman while doing so, that means more viewers for us, which also should mean higher ratings. And from a business perspective, ratings and buy rates are what make the world of professional wrestling go 'round."

Angle would offer our Team Raw technical brilliance for years to come



3 SMACKDOWN'S THIRD PICK:

CHRIS JERICHO

Dan Murphy: "It's hard to believe that the WWF's first undisputed World champion fell down to the sixth overall pick in the draft, but that's what happens when your title reign fails to capture the imagination of the fans. We have confidence in Jericho, though. He's a hard-working professional who will do whatever is asked of him and probably a heck of a lot more."

"Jericho's best days are ahead of him, too. Since he's been in the WWF, nobody's truly tapped into his comedic side, and that's what made him such a hot commodity at the time he jumped from WCW to the WWF. In our opinion, he's still a wrestler with golden potential, even if his first run with the undisputed gold wasn't all it should've been. We want to give him an honest shot to shine. And that means no Stephanie at his side."

"In fact, Jericho's only downside is that he hasn't been treated as a top-tier performer as of yet. If he started to resent that, we'd have a big problem, which is why we'd be committed to changing that perception. A happy Chris Jericho is a strong and productive Chris Jericho, and that's important to everyone, including Chris Jericho."

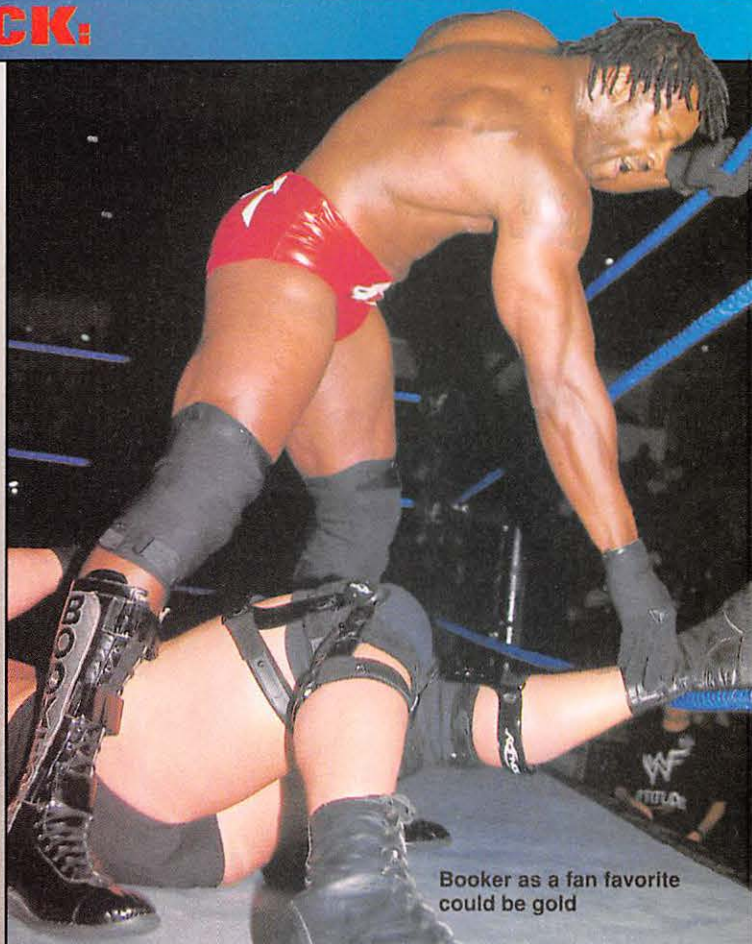
Y2J would get picked in our draft ... and picked quickly!

4 RAW'S FOURTH PICK: BOOKER T

Dave Lenker: "There aren't too many bad things that you can say about Booker T. He's such a consummate professional that it's hard to pick out any major flaws in his game at all. He might not have the career longevity of some of these other top picks, but he's not going away tomorrow, either."

"The most important thing that we would do with Booker would be to develop his backbone and make him a fan favorite. Once that was accomplished, we don't see any reason why we wouldn't want him representing Raw as its champion. Other than his debut match for the WWF, in which he wrestled Buff Bagwell, can you name another really bad match that he's been in? We actually sat down, thought about it, even did some research, and we couldn't come up with a single one. And who doesn't want the spinerooni on their program?"

"Of course, if we drafted Booker, we'd have to give consideration to signing his brother, Stevie Ray. Together, Harlem Heat captured the WCW World tag team title 10 times and did for tag team wrestling in the early to mid-1990s what the Hardys, Dudleys, and Edge and Christian have done for it in recent years."



Booker as a fan favorite could be gold

4 SMACKDOWN'S FOURTH PICK: THE UNDERTAKER



Undertaker would have to settle for number four, Smackdown

Brandi Mankiewicz: "Although I've been known to refer to him as The Underredneck, 'Taker has been one of the WWF's most consistent performers over the past year or so, and Harry and Dan convinced me that we should take him with this pick. His matches have been surprisingly competitive, compelling, and well-wrestled, and he'll never disappoint you with a lack of effort. Since he is a genuine locker room leader, that should never, ever be a cause for concern with him."

"If I were to actually have him on the roster, I might tweak his gimmick a bit, perhaps bring back a bit more of his darker side. He's a little too ordinary right now for my taste, especially considering his colorful and macabre past. But there's no doubt that people are still into his character. And, actually, that might be his biggest flaw. The fans are so into him that it's hard for him to actually get heat as a heel. No matter what he does, the fans cheer him on. Maybe only a match with Hulk Hogan could get the fans to cheer strongly against him at this point."



5 RAW'S FIFTH PICK: HULK HOGAN

Frank Krewda: "It might seem odd that Hogan made it this long without getting drafted, but we really thought that this is right about where he'd fall in the order. He's too risky a proposition to waste a higher pick on. Injuries or a simple lack of motivation could take him out of the sport tomorrow. In fact, the WWF's decision to put him back into the red and yellow lets you know how much confidence it has in his longevity: not much at all."

"Hogan has such a huge upside, though, that it would've been ridiculous to pass on him at this stage in the draft. Rock might be a bigger name right now, but there are generations of people who've never heard of him. Everyone knows the name Hulk Hogan, whether they ever followed wrestling or not. Just having his name on the bill, no matter where on the card, ensures that a few thousand tickets will be sold. That kind of financial impact can't be overstated, especially when tackling an undertaking so grandiose as the brand extension. We just hope this latest wave of popularity he's been riding lasts a while."

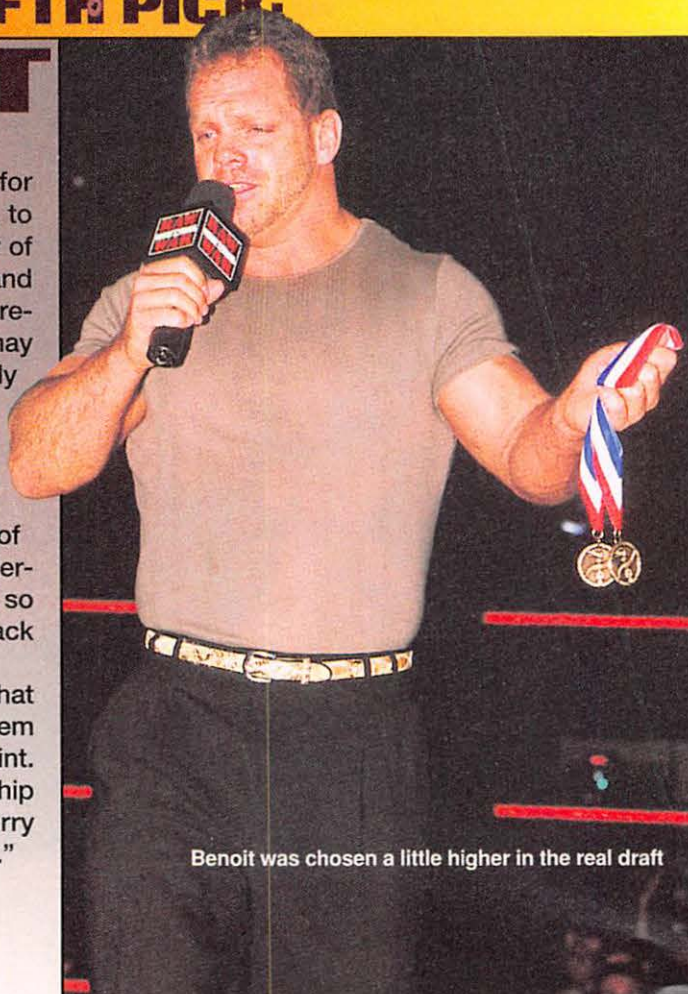
Would Hogan be a steal as a fifth-rounder?

5 SMACKDOWN'S FIFTH PICK: CHRIS BENOIT

Harry Burkett: "Benoit is a really nice acquisition for our side, especially since Raw drafted Kurt Angle. And, to be honest, we're not sure that we didn't get the better of the two wrestlers. Benoit has yet to develop a strong and compelling personality, but if handled correctly and carefully, he's more than ready for the main event. Angle may have been too misused at this point for him to actually prosper as a fan favorite WWF World champion."

"Benoit's injury situation raised some concerns, but the WWF said that Benoit was ready to start in-ring workouts as this issue was going to press. And since Steve Austin came back so strong from the same type of surgery, we think that lessened our risk factor considerably. Who knows, we might not have drafted Benoit so high if Austin hadn't proved that you could come back from such a serious spinal injury/surgery."

"Another thing that we really like about Benoit is that he's never been WWF World champion. That may seem like an odd comment at first, but let us make our point. We'd get to construct his first WWF World championship reign the way we wanted to, without having to worry about how previous reigns with the title made him look."



Benoit was chosen a little higher in the real draft

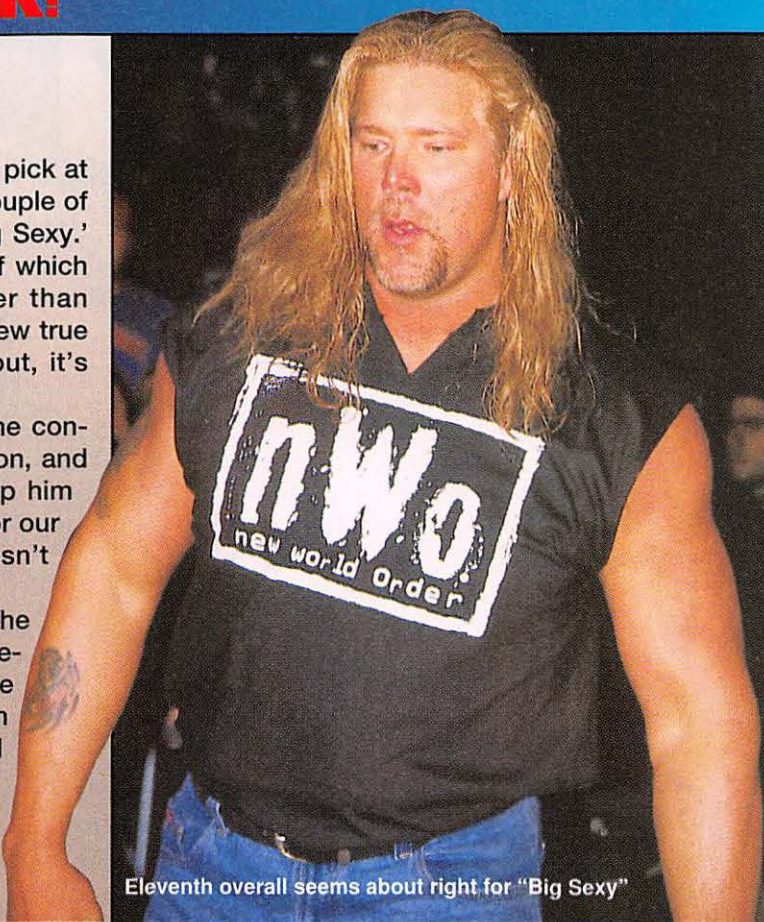
6 RAW'S SIXTH PICK:

KEVIN NASH

Will Welsh: "We weren't sure what to do with this pick at first, so there was some pretty spirited debate. A couple of other people came to mind, but we settled on 'Big Sexy.' After putting aside the negatives about him (one of which was his temperament after being selected lower than expected), we realized that he was the one of the few true impact players left on the board. From here on out, it's mostly guys with a lot of potential.

"And no matter what you can say about Nash, he connects with the fans. They want to give him a reaction, and they never fail to do so. As long as we could keep him from becoming the way-too-cool heel, he's a lock for our top tier. The fact that he was our sixth pick doesn't mean that he'd be headed to the mid-card.

"Nash also has a wonderful and rich history in the sport, one that many different storylines could be created from. Any smart promoter with the film footage that the WWF possesses must see a gold mine when looking at Nash. Just imagine the profits that could be seen from the marketing of a tape of Nash's greatest hits, featuring footage from his days as Oz, Vinnie Vegas, Diesel, and Kevin Nash. There's greenbacks in them hills, baby."



Eleventh overall seems about right for "Big Sexy"

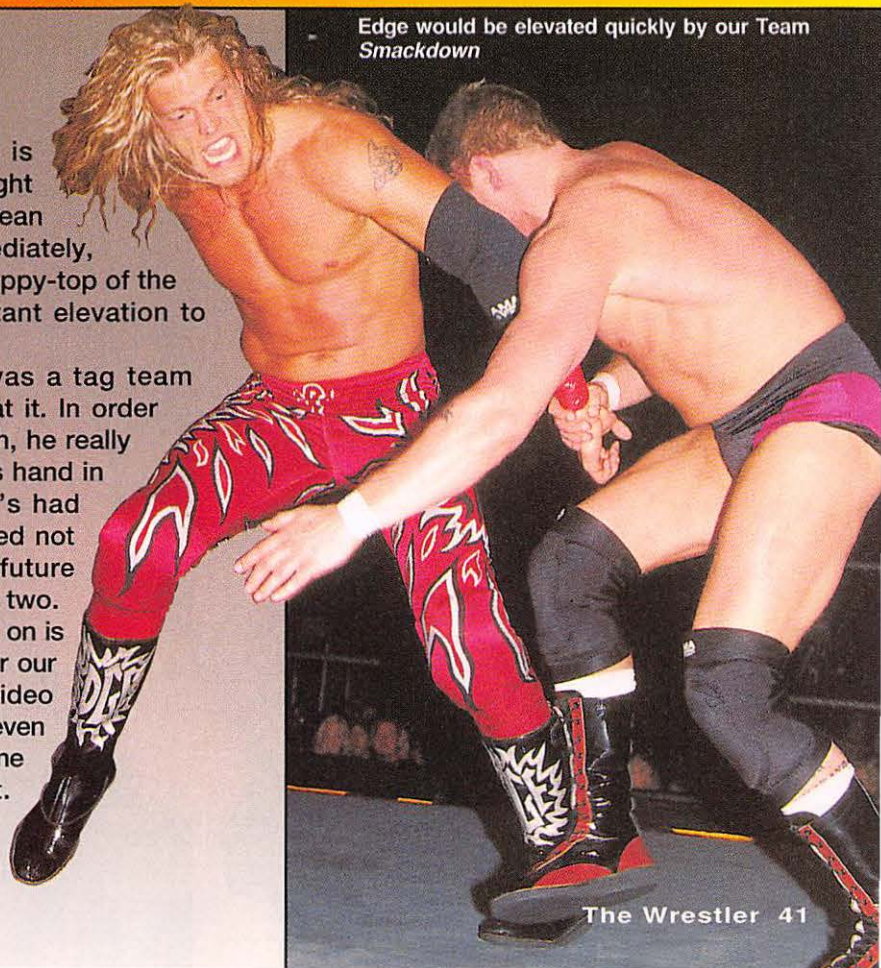
6 SMACKDOWN'S SIXTH PICK:

EDGE

Dan Murphy: "Now here's a guy who is getting selected just when everyone thought he would. This pick doesn't necessarily mean that Edge would be main-eventing immediately, but it does mean that he'd be at the very tippy-top of the mid-card, just waiting for that all-important elevation to finally take place.

"For the majority of his career, he was a tag team wrestler, and he was pretty damn good at it. In order for his career to start going places, though, he really needed to break from Christian and try his hand in the singles division. Since doing so, he's had some ups and downs, but he's too talented not to make it pretty big. We see him as a future Smackdown champion, maybe in a year or two.

"The one thing that we'd have Edge work on is his personality. He's too shiny and happy for our liking. Remember those dark, menacing video promos that teased Edge's debut before he even stepped foot into the WWF? Whatever became of that character? We'd like to find out. There's a lot that could be done with that."



Edge would be elevated quickly by our Team Smackdown

7 RAW'S SEVENTH PICK:

JEFF HARDY

Dave Lenker: "Our strategy for this pick was to basically stave off the horrid McMahon's disease, which somehow restricts your sight to big men and big men only. With Hogan and Nash having been our last two picks, we felt it was time to inject the roster with a bit of youthful exuberance, and there's nobody on the WWF roster more youthful and more exuberant than Jeff Hardy."

"Hardy's short feud with Triple-H last year, during which he captured the Intercontinental title, was too short for us to analyze its success. In order to really evaluate his singles potential, he would need to be given another push, one free of his brother, Matt. Of course, that leads to one very important question: Do we stay away from drafting Matt just to find out if Jeff can make it on his own? We'll have to see."



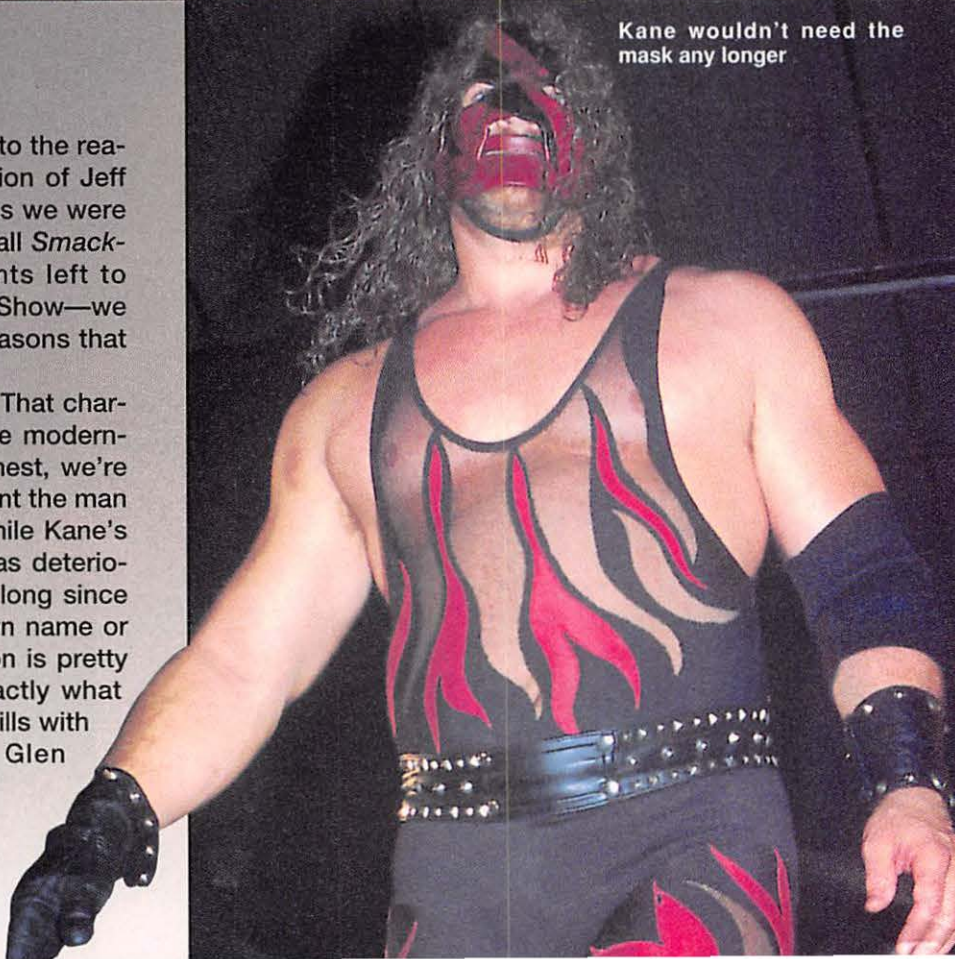
More singles wrestling would be in Jeff Hardy's future on *Raw*

7 SMACKDOWN'S SEVENTH PICK:

KANE

Brandi Mankiewicz: "Listening to the reasoning behind Team *Raw*'s selection of Jeff Hardy made us realize that perhaps we were actually putting together a too-small *Smackdown* roster. With only two giants left to choose from—Kane and The Big Show—we went with Kane, and not for the reasons that you might think."

"Basically, we don't want Kane. That character is too 1980s to survive in the modern-day WWF much longer. To be honest, we're surprised it lasted this long. We want the man behind the mask, Glen Jacobs. While Kane's reputation as a serious wrestler has deteriorated over the years, it's been so long since Jacobs has wrestled under his own name or another gimmick that his reputation is pretty much nonexistent. And that's exactly what we want: a big man with proven skills with a character that we can mold. Glen Jacobs, welcome to *Smackdown*."



Kane wouldn't need the mask any longer

8 RAW'S EIGHTH PICK:

STACY KEIBLER

The first woman selected? Stacy!

Frank Krewda: "Wrestling isn't all about wrestling, you know. Of course you know. There are other aspects that are just as vital to the success of a promotion—the most important of which might be the female presence. And since Keibler's 'Q' rating is so much higher than that of any other WWF diva, she should be the first woman selected, and with this pick, she has been."

"Believe me, this is not a wasted pick by any stretch of the imagination. It may seem so, but it's not. The right female can help a wrestling promotion do unbelievable business. The WWF careers of Sunny, Sable, and Chyna all proved that much, and Keibler is the heir apparent to the crown of top WWF diva. If she avoids the pitfalls that a career in wrestling can often present, there's no reason that she can't become a huge household name. Then she'll be able to make a jump to other entertainment outlets, further increasing her value."



8 SMACKDOWN'S EIGHTH PICK:

TRISH STRATUS

Harry Burkett: "Let's call this pick the first retaliatory pick of the draft. Team Raw is right on when it says that a pretty face can help drive a promotion's success, and, at least to us, there is no better female prospect in the WWF than Trish Stratus."

"She might not have Keibler's long legs, and she might not be willing to dress quite as provocatively as Keibler, but she does have one thing that Keibler has yet to display: a willingness to wrestle and tangle with the best women wrestlers in the world. Stratus has also proven herself a quick study, having gone from valet to full-time wrestler to more than respectable women's champion faster than any woman in recent memory."

"Let's not forget that Trish is pretty darn hot, too. Her undeniable good looks, along with her dedication to succeed in the ring, make her an irresistible draft pick at this position for Team Smackdown."



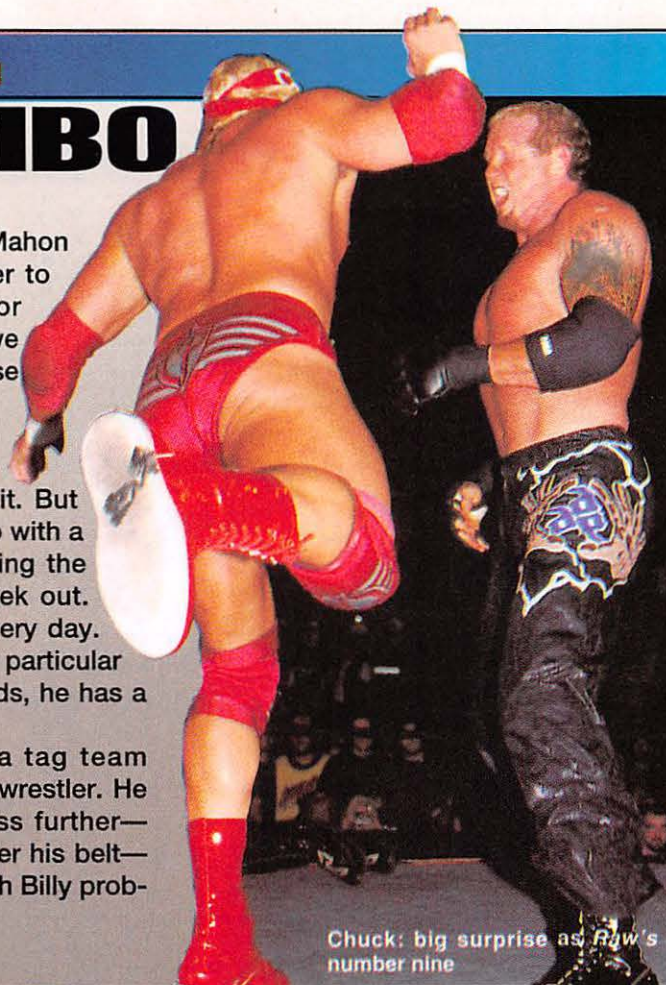
9 RAW'S NINTH PICK:

CHUCK PALUMBO

Will Welsh: "In the WWF's original draft, Vince McMahon drafted Palumbo and his partner, Billy Gunn, in order to secure the WWF World tag team championship for *Smackdown*. Since that wasn't an issue in our draft, we decided to draft Palumbo this high in the draft because we think his talent merits it."

"Shocker, huh? You should've seen the looks on the faces of Team *Smackdown* when Dave called Palumbo's name. Brandi, Harry, and Dan couldn't believe it. But other than realizing that we could have gotten Palumbo with a later pick, we're happy with our decision. Since joining the WWF, Palumbo has proven himself week in and week out. He's still shows his inexperience, but he's learning every day. He might not be the most outstanding wrestler on any particular show, but he's far from the worst, either. In other words, he has a huge upside."

"While most of his career has been spent as a tag team wrestler, we predict great things for him as a singles wrestler. He has the look and the basic skills needed to progress further—that's for sure. All he needs are a few more years under his belt—and maybe just a bit more confidence. His gimmick with Billy probably isn't instilling a whole lot of self-assurance."



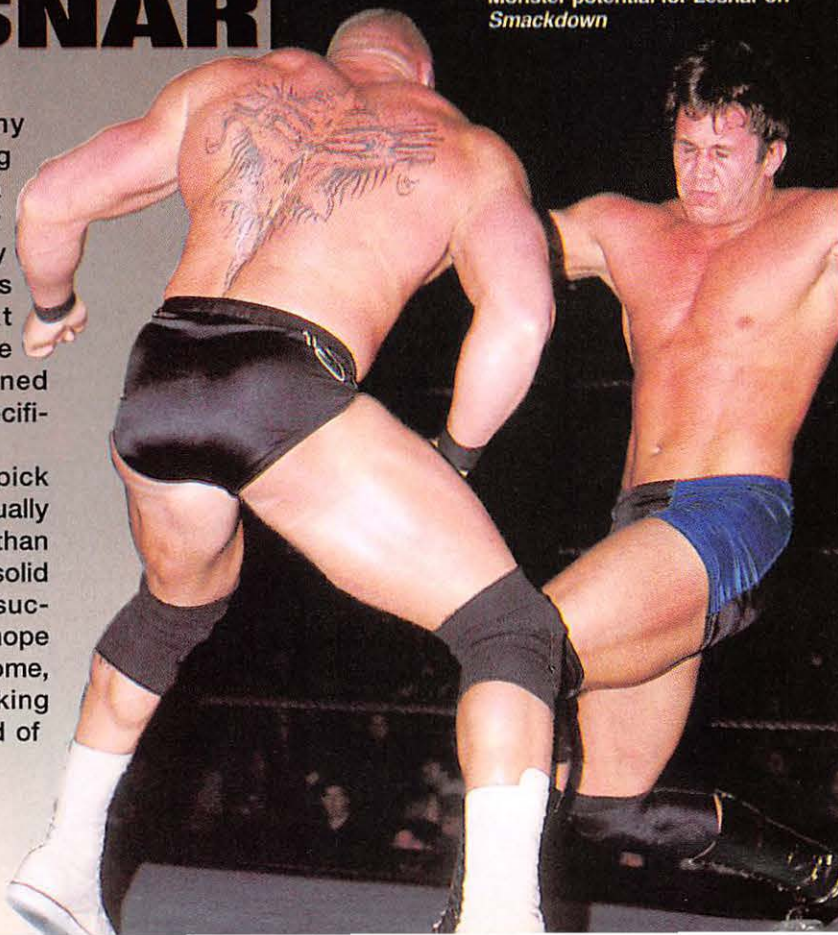
Chuck: big surprise as *Raw*'s number nine

9 SMACKDOWN'S NINTH PICK:

BROCK LESNAR

Dan Murphy: "There aren't too many wrestlers who make a huge, crushing impact the minute they debut on TV for a national promotion. In recent years, only Bill Goldberg comes to mind. That's why Lesnar is such an intriguing figure. He has all the potential to become the next Goldberg, if only because the WWF did the right thing by making sure he was trained properly in its developmental system, specifically in Ohio Valley Wrestling."

"Taking Lesnar with the 18th overall pick isn't such a bad gamble, either. I was actually lobbying to take him a few picks higher than this. If he fails here, we missed out on a solid mid-carder, but nothing else. But if he succeeds and becomes the monster that we hope he'll become and it looks like he *can* become, we're labeled geniuses—and we're banking that Lesnar has one hell of a career ahead of him."



Monster potential for Lesnar on *Smackdown*

10 RAW'S TENTH PICK:

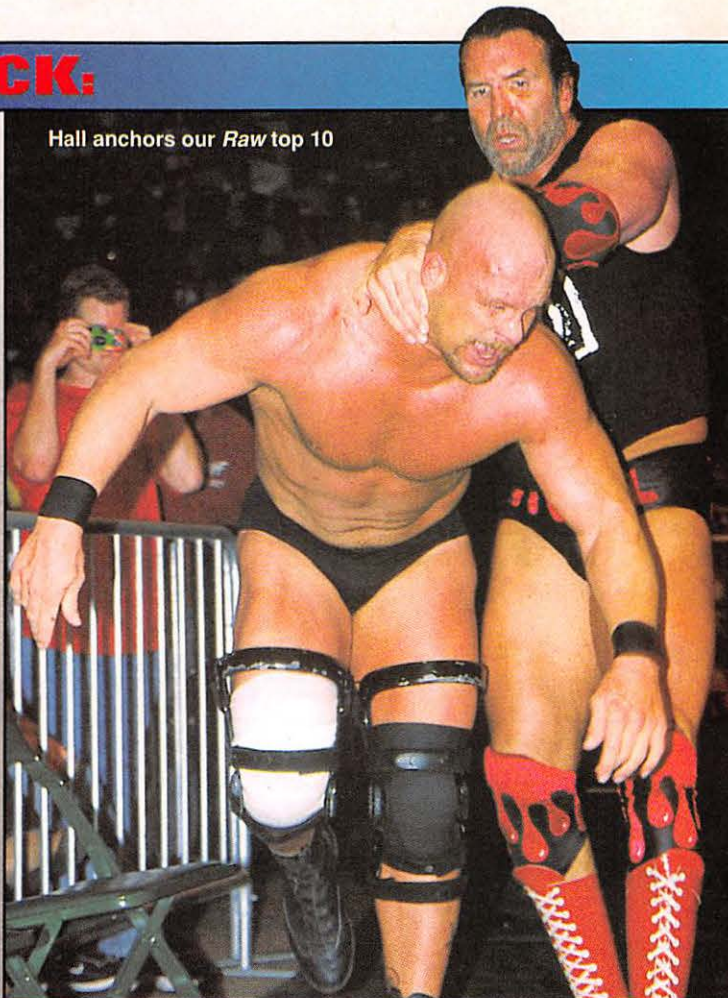
SCOTT HALL

Dave Lenker: "Scott Hall might not be a 10th pick all by his lonesome, but considering that we drafted Kevin Nash with our sixth pick, we had to give him consideration. And given the chance to keep The Outsiders an intact unit, why not go ahead and do it, right?"

"Of course, it helps that Hall hasn't been a liability since returning to the WWF. From all accounts, he's been his normal, irritating self at times, but he hasn't been a menace and a danger, which is what many WWF wrestlers thought and probably feared he'd be upon returning. Instead, he's been the New World Order's in-ring star. His match with Austin at WrestleMania surprised everyone, mostly because Austin didn't have to carry Hall to a good match; Hall more than kept up his end of the bargain.

"We'd still keep a close eye on Hall and his antics, but if he can keep Nash fresh while also injecting excitement into storylines of his very own, it's a win-win situation for all involved. It's not like the guy doesn't have incentive to stay on the straight and narrow."

Hall anchors our Raw top 10



10 SMACKDOWN'S TENTH PICK:

THE BIG SHOW

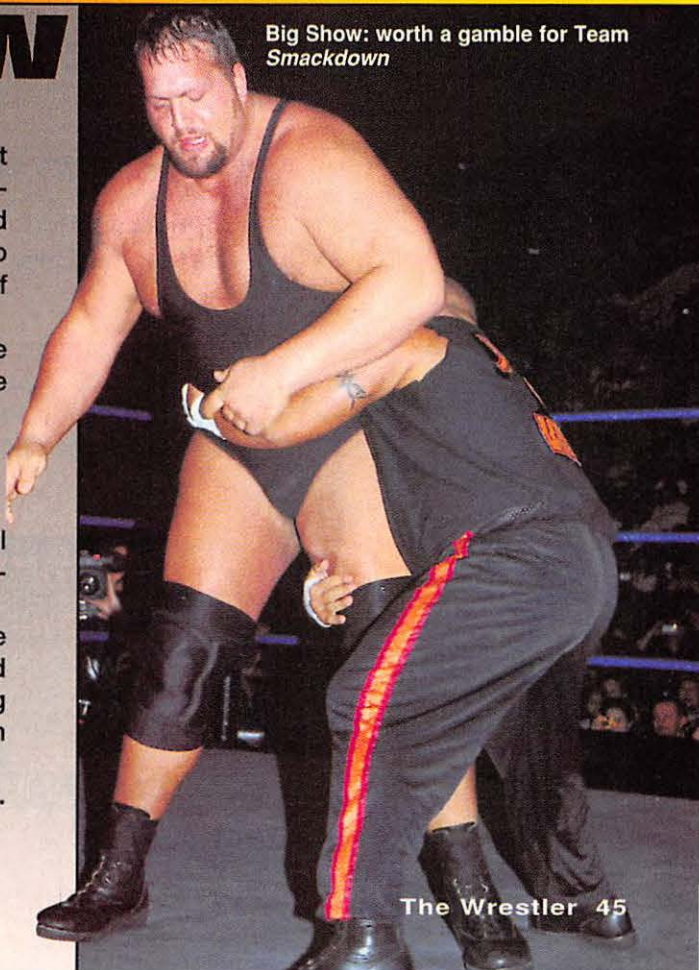
Brandi Mankiewicz: "There's just too much potential left in Show to not take a shot with him at this position. A former WWF and WCW world champion already, Show should have the undisputed WWF World championship served to him on a silver platter within the next few years, but only if he commits to being the very best that he can be.

"Unfortunately for Show, that always seems to be the question: Is he finally motivated enough to do what he needs to do in order to become the wrestler that everyone thought he should have been two or three years ago? It's a horrible question to ask, and nobody hates hearing it more than Show, but it persists, and for a good reason. Maybe the fact that the question is still being asked is the reason that Show continues to under-achieve.

"Some of the extra weight is off, which means that the motivation is surely there. If it wasn't there, Show could have collected on his lucrative contract while spending the rest of his WWF days entertaining OVW fans in Louisville.

"We are convinced that selecting Show isn't a gamble. It'll pay off. The only question is when."

Big Show: worth a gamble for Team Smackdown



THE NEXT 20 BEST OF THE REST

Raw number 11: Tajiri

"He's already the most over cruiserweight in the Federation's history—and he barely speaks a lick of English! I'd like to bring out the sadistic side of him, the side that we saw so much of in ECW." —Will Welsh

Smackdown number 11: William Regal

"Is he overrated? Possibly. But not at this position he's not. He doesn't even have to wrestle very often to be valuable to us." —Dan Murphy

Raw number 12: Matt Hardy

"Let's keep those Hardy Boyz together. Actually, I'd like to give them both a shot at singles careers again, but it'd be nice to have the option of putting them back together in the right situations." —Frank Krewda

Smackdown number 12: Buh Buh Ray Dudley

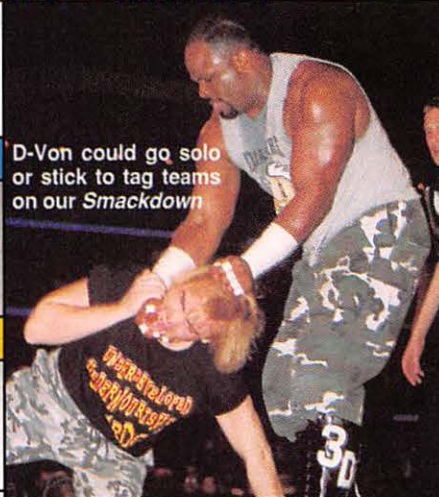
"I always loved watching him instigate near-riots at every ECW show. I think he still has that kind of potential left in him." —Harry Burkett

Raw number 13: The Hurricane

"There are gimmicks, and then there are gimmicks. Hurricane is a laugh riot. So much could be done to make him a valuable mid-carder." —Dave Lenker

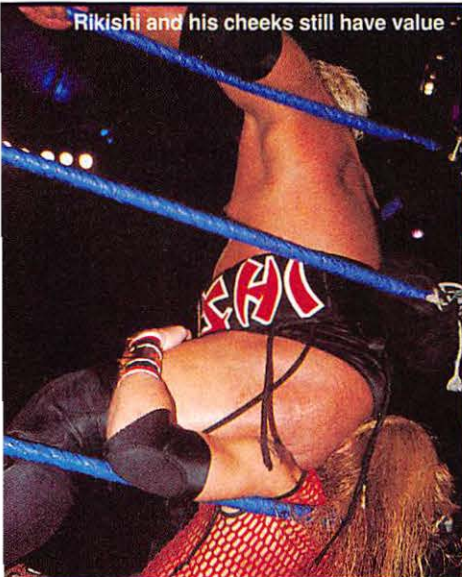
Smackdown number 13: D-Von Dudley

"Finally, our first natural tag team. If the preacher thing didn't work out, we few months down the line." —Brandi Mankiewicz



D-Von could go solo or stick to tag teams on our Smackdown

Rikishi and his cheeks still have value



Raw number 14: Rikishi

"How did Rikishi drop down this far in the draft? Maybe his act has played itself out, but I think he could still be an important role player for us." —Will Welsh

Smackdown number 14: Jazz

"Trish needs some competition, doesn't she? Everybody has to know by now what a terrific wrestler Jazz is." —Dan Murphy

Raw number 15: X-Pac

"He completes the New World Order, plus he's a solid cruiserweight. He's still a lot better in the ring than people give him credit for." —Frank Krewda

Smackdown number 15: Lance Storm

"Overrated? Underrated? It doesn't matter. He's ours now. Maybe we can create another Team Canada on the Smackdown side." —Harry Burkett

Raw number 16: Lita

"We're not going to put her in the ring with Stacy, are we? But we do need at least one solid woman wrestler with name value." —*Frank Krewda*

Smackdown number 16: The Big Valbowski

"Just promise me that we're going to drop that awful gimmick of his as soon as humanly possible." —*Brandi Mankiewicz*

Raw number 17: Mark Henry

"Nineteen sure sounds better than number nine if you ask me. But you can't argue that the guy doesn't have at least some potential." —*Dave Lenker*

Smackdown number 17: Torrie Wilson

"Hubba, hubba. Hey, if nothing else, this means no more Stacy vs. Torrie matches on Raw." —*Dan Murphy*

Raw number 18: Bradshaw

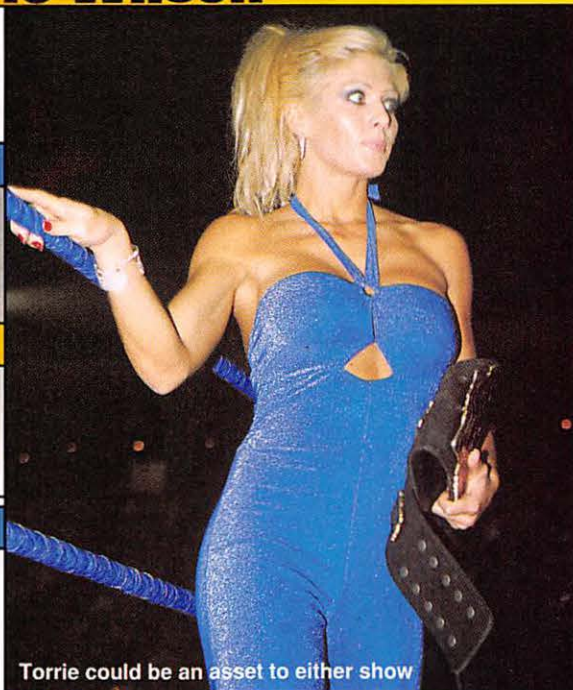
"He's what J.R. likes to call a 'good hand.' If things work out well with him, he could be a lot more than that, too." —*Will Welsh*

Smackdown number 18: Test

"Okay, he has pretty solid ring skills, so if you promise me that you'll unearth this guy's personality, I'll be willing to go for it." —*Harry Burkett*

Raw number 19: Rhyno

"We figured we'd be able to steal him in a late round. Too early to tell if he'll be the same after having a serious neck injury, but we love the upside of this guy." —*Frank Krewda*



Torrie could be an asset to either show

Smackdown number 19: Billy Kidman

"We're hoping we can get him to use that shooting star press a lot more again. It's one thing that makes his matches special." —*Dan Murphy*

Raw number 20: Raven

"He's funny, he's a good all-around wrestler, and he's just strange enough to be a key role player. We think he can do a lot for us." —*Dave Lenker*

Smackdown number 20: Randy Orton

"He's shown a lot at house shows, in dark matches at TV tapings, and in OVW. As a third-generation pro wrestler, this kid knows what he's getting into." —*Brandi Mankiewicz*

LIVING ON THE EDGE... AND LOVING IT!

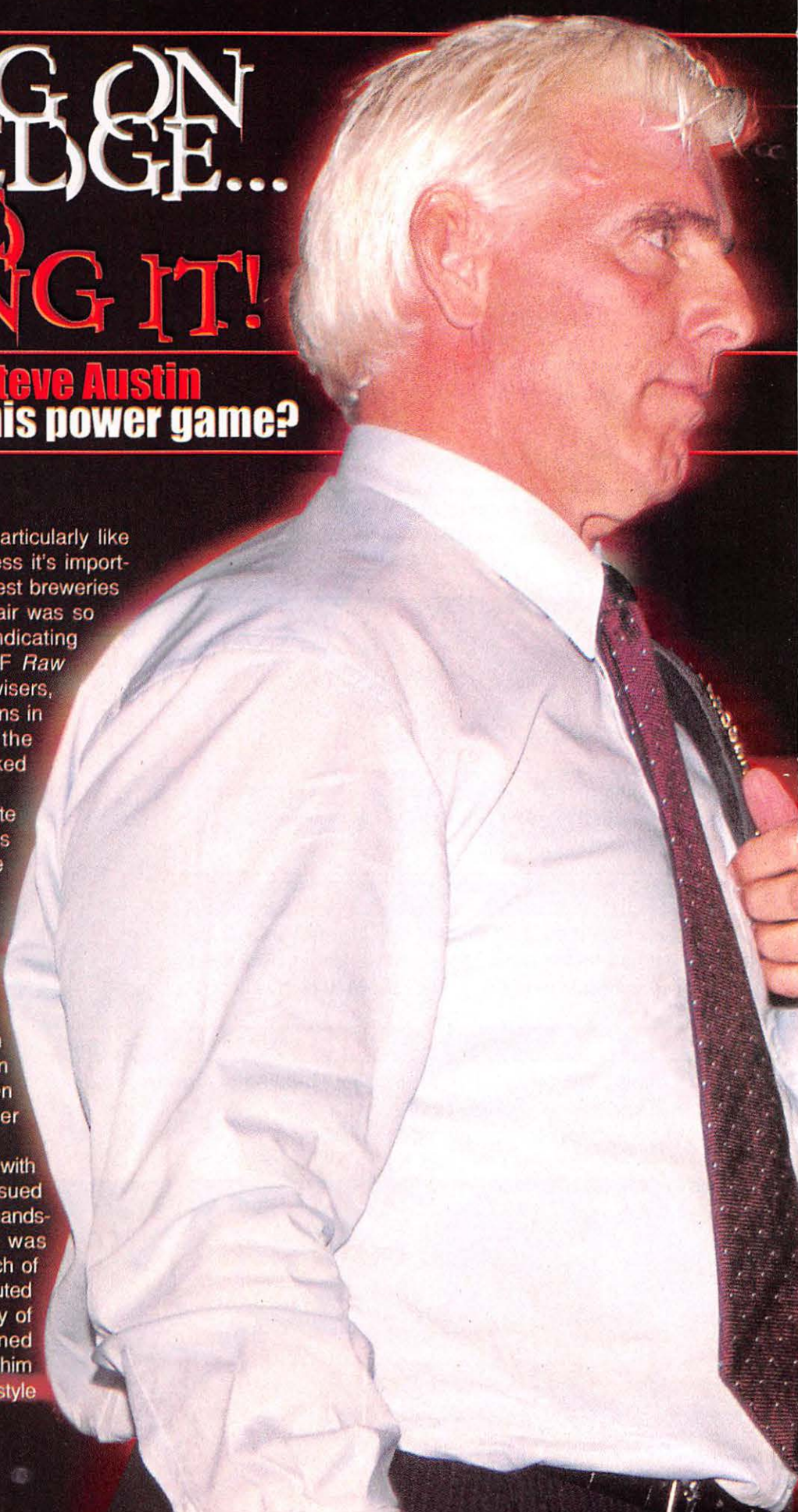
How long can **Steve Austin**
play his power game?

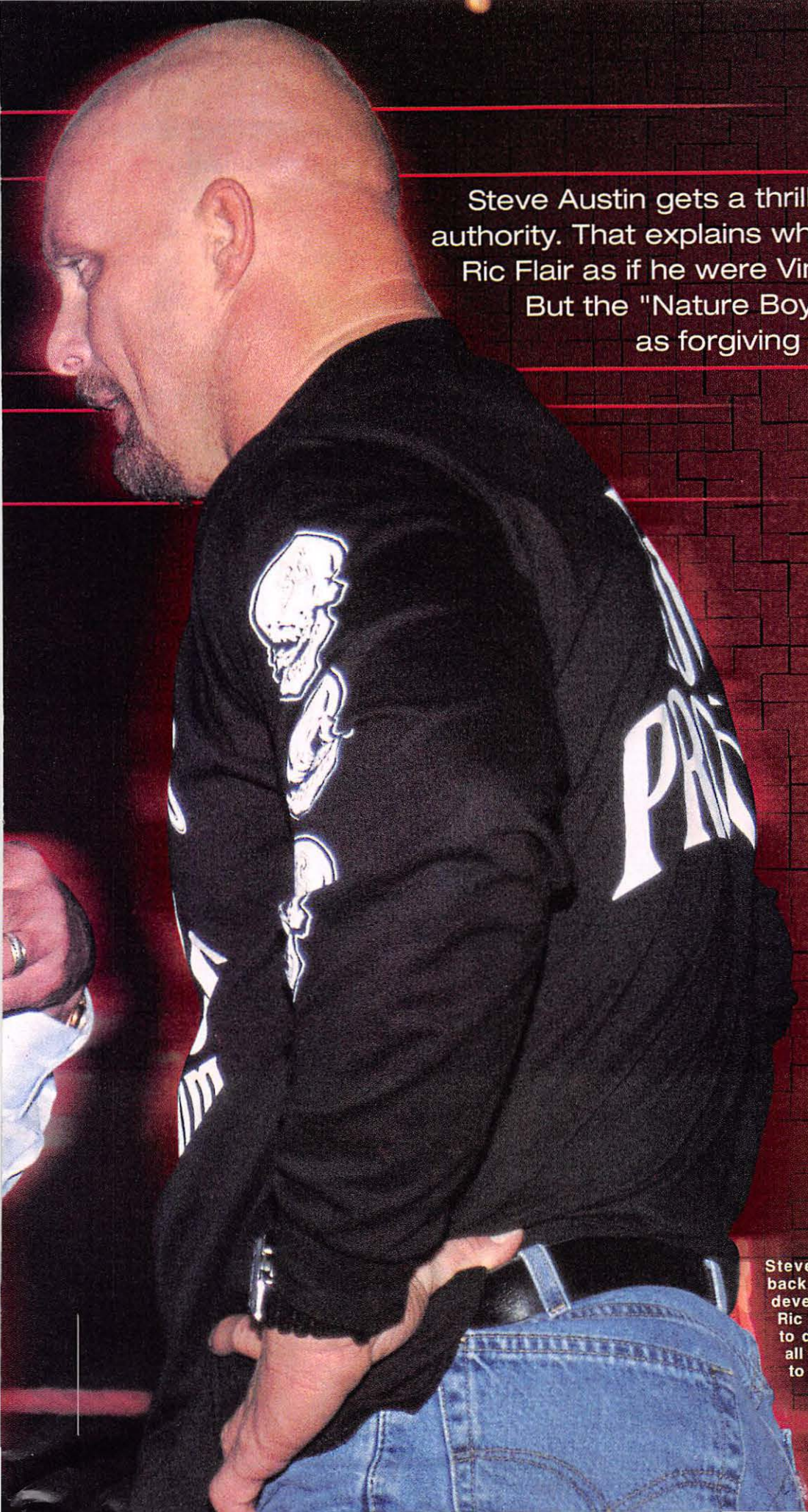
By Harry Burkett

RIC FLAIR DOESN'T particularly like the taste of beer, unless it's imported from one of the finest breweries in Germany. Nevertheless, Flair was so excited about Steve Austin indicating that he would sign with WWF *Raw* that he called for a few Stevewisers, strutted inside the ring with cans in hand, and guzzled some of the brew right there. He even licked the foam off his lips.

Ric Flair doesn't like the taste of stunners. Period. But that's what Austin gave Flair while the "Nature Boy" was celebrating his recruitment of the Federation's hottest free agent. Sure, Vince McMahon received even worse treatment that night. McMahon got a stunner when Austin told him "no," Flair got a stunner when Austin told him "yes," and then Austin gave McMahon another stunner as a goodbye gift.

But why did Austin treat Flair with such contempt? Flair had pursued Austin as his draft choice in a hands-off, respectful manner. That was quite different from the approach of McMahon, who prematurely touted Austin as the exclusive property of *Smackdown*. After Austin turned down McMahon, Flair honored him by partaking in a "Stone-Cold"-style postmatch ritual.



A profile photograph of Steve Austin, a bald man with a goatee, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. The shirt has a white graphic on the sleeve that includes a skull and the letters 'PAC'. He is looking down and to the left. The background is a dark red wall with a repeating geometric pattern.

Steve Austin gets a thrill out of defying authority. That explains why he's treating Ric Flair as if he were Vince McMahon. But the "Nature Boy" might not be as forgiving as Vinnie Mac.

Steve Austin is not about to back down in this feud that's developing between him and Ric Flair—and Flair isn't about to do so, either. Might not be all that wise for "Stone-Cold" to fight the law this time.

CROSSING THE BOTTOM LINE

10 Times The WWF Could Have Fired "Stone-Cold"

Steve Austin's violations would make for the thickest file folder in any human resources department. Verbal warnings have resulted in Austin's physical retaliation. Since "Stone-Cold" became a WWF employee in 1995, he has been guilty of utter insubordination. And his infractions go far beyond punching the time clock late or taking long lunches. There have been serious grounds for Austin's termination many times over.

1. Holding Vince McMahon as a hostage: The one time McMahon tried to fire Austin, "Stone-Cold" appeared on *Raw* and held the WWF owner at "gunpoint" in a dark, disturbing show. It was enough to make McMahon wet his pants, although it turned out to be a toy gun.

2. Dropping Triple-H and his car from a crane: Most employees would be fired *and* arrested for attempting homicide in the workplace. Not Austin. "The Rattlesnake" used a crane to hoist Triple-H's car, with Helmsley inside, and drop it on the pavement, roof-first, at Survivor Series 2000.

3. Stunning Vince McMahon the first time: McMahon refused to give Austin medical clearance following a spinal injury at the hands of Owen Hart at SummerSlam 1997. What did the WWF owner get for his concern? A stunner.

4. Giving Mike Tyson the middle finger: Vince McMahon's signing of Mike Tyson as an enforcer for Aus-

tin's match against World champ Shawn Michaels was quite a coup. Austin flipping off Tyson created a spectacle two months before WrestleMania XIV even took place.

5. Tossing the I-C title belt into a river: Pedro Morales and Tito Santana spent hours admiring their Intercontinental title belts. Austin had no such respect. After forfeiting the championship to The Rock in December 1997, Austin dropped the belt off a bridge and into a river.

6. Flattening Vince McMahon's limousine with a monster truck: Austin couldn't have claimed that he didn't see Mr. McMahon's white limousine, or that he had trouble parallel parking. That's because Austin backed up and drove over it again and again.

7. Pouring concrete into Vince McMahon's Corvette: An open sunroof was all Austin needed to pour concrete from his idling cement truck. The heavy, oozing concrete quickly expanded inside the car, bursting the windows.

8. Hosing down the McMahons with beer: It was bad enough when Austin drove a beer truck into the arena and slammed the brakes just short of the ring. But using a hose to blast Vince, Shane, and their associates went too far. Fortunately, Shane was over 21.

9. Ramming the ring with a Zamboni: This time, Austin did ram the ring. Yet that was only half of it. "Stone-Cold" had already driven over staging lights and other backstage equipment as he headed into the arena. No ice rink would tolerate this kind of behavior.

10. Using "3:16" as a catchphrase: Some fans were offended when Austin mocked born-again Christian Jake Roberts by turning the New Testament's John 3:16 verse into "Austin 3:16." Jeff Jarrett complained about it after jumping to the WWF in 1997.

—Harry Burkett



"Stone-Cold" and "Iron" Mike weren't always so friendly!

What thanks did he get? Nothin' but a stunner.

The following week, Flair had a message for Austin, The Undertaker, and any other *Raw* superstars who had any ideas about abusing the owner. "If anybody puts their hands on me—thinks about putting their hands on me—there's gonna be hell to pay!" exclaimed Flair.

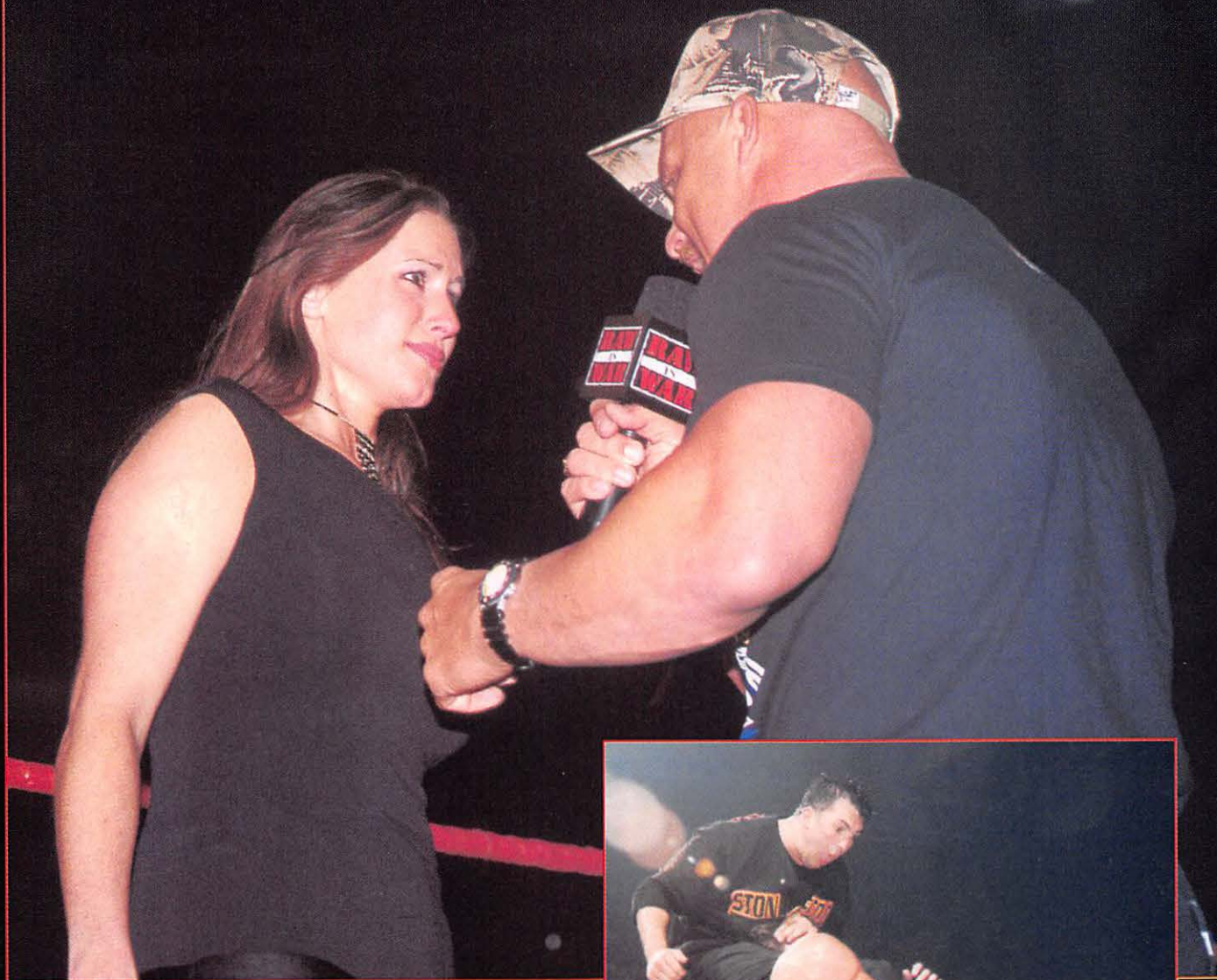
Later in the show, Flair confronted the NWO about the group's attack on Kane earlier in the evening. Kevin Nash grabbed Flair by the lapels and threatened him. Flair suspended Nash—indefinitely and without pay—on the spot.

During that night's main event pitting Austin against

Scott Hall, X-Pac ran into the ring while the referee was knocked down. He and Hall stomped and brutalized Austin until Flair literally pulled X-Pac aside, enabling "Stone-Cold" to use stunners on Hall, then on X-Pac. What other wrestling executive would take such a hands-on approach to ensure that one of his employees got a fair shake?

How did "The Texas Rattlesnake" repay him? With nothin' but a stunner.

Austin isn't sorry. In fact, he told Flair that he had brought the second stunner upon himself by interfering in his match against Hall.



"He's on thin ice, that's all I've got to say!" ranted Flair. "I told Austin and Undertaker, both to their face and eyes, that if they touched me, there'd be *hell to pay!* I meant it, pal. If they touch me, they can pack up and leave! That's it! I'm the 'Nature Boy,' I own *Raw*, and what I say goes!"

Austin's response? "Like I said before, I got all the respect in the world for Flair, for a man who has been champion so many times," he said. "But the WWF is 'Stone-Cold's' stompin' ground, and Ric Flair is just livin' in it. I'll give Flair a stunner any time I damn well feel like it. He can have it one of two ways: I can give him a stunner, and then I'll give him a beer later and we'll have a big laugh about it. Or I can give him a stunner and make his life a livin' hell. It's that simple."

"Stone-Cold" sounds confident, but how will his anti-management stance play in Flair's *Raw*? Why should Flair tolerate Austin's anti-authority behavior? Austin already owes Flair a huge debt. On November 19, McMahon was ready to award the WWF World title to Kurt Angle when Flair made his shocking return to *Raw*. Flair announced he had bought enough WWFE stock to be co-owner of the Federation and refused to allow McMahon to strip Austin, the rightful champion, of the title. Flair established himself as Austin's ally immediately. They shared some beers.



For the last half-decade, Austin has been able to bully Stephanie whenever he has felt like it (top), and we all know how much abuse he dished out to both Shane and Vince McMahon (above). He could get away with all that, mainly because the McMahons were perceived as evil, and he was (and still is) so popular. Will he get the same level of fan support against Flair?



Maybe "Stone-Cold" ought to stick to feuding with other full-time wrestlers such as Kurt Angle (although Angle is a *Smackdown* wrestler). It's just hard for him to change his ways. He has this thing about thumbing his nose at authority.

That means nothing to "Stone-Cold." No one faulted Austin for targeting Vince McMahon. The Austin-McMahon war began following the Survivor Series double-cross of Bret Hart, and McMahon was viewed as a pompous jerk by most. Then McMahon tried to mold Austin into his idea of a respectable superstar. Austin rebelled and dished out the punishment McMahon had deserved for a long time.

Now Austin seems like the jerk. Flair has not been a tyrannical co-owner, despite his past record for becoming drunk with power during his tenures as WCW CEO and president. Flair has done everything possible to make Austin a happy employee.

Maybe Austin thinks he's untouchable. Even during

Austin's 2001 run as a heel, many fans wouldn't boo him no matter what he did. They wanted him to be above authority. And because he was so popular, he had a lot of leverage with the boss. If "Stone-Cold" thinks a war with Flair will help his career, as Austin-

McMahon clearly did, he could be mistaken. After all, Flair enjoys that same aura of invincibility: Some fans will cheer him no matter what he does. In a head-to-head battle between these two inher-

If 'Stone-Cold' thinks a war with Flair will help his career, as Austin-McMahon clearly did, he could be mistaken. After all, Flair enjoys that same aura of invincibility: Some fans will cheer him no matter what he does. In a head-to-head battle between these two inherently popular superstars, fans could decide Austin is wrong, then turn against him.

ently popular superstars, fans could decide Austin is wrong, then turn against him.

Austin may think the brand extension has increased his worth to the company. On *Raw*, he is the undisputed star, without having to compete with The Rock or Hulk

Hogan. World champion Triple-H's schedule is divided between the two brands. Perhaps Austin assumes Flair needs him for *Raw* to be successful.

WWF official Pat Patterson doesn't believe that notion factors into Flair's decision-making. "Flair is not a business genius like Mr. McMahon," he said. "Flair will let personal issues get in the way of profit, and he'll fire or suspend Austin as quickly as he did Nash. Mr. McMahon was smarter than that. He knew him vs. Austin was a moneymaker. Flair doesn't have that kind of business sense. He's all ego. It'll get ugly. Either Flair will fire Austin or they'll settle it in the ring. Personally, I hope they tear each other limb from limb."

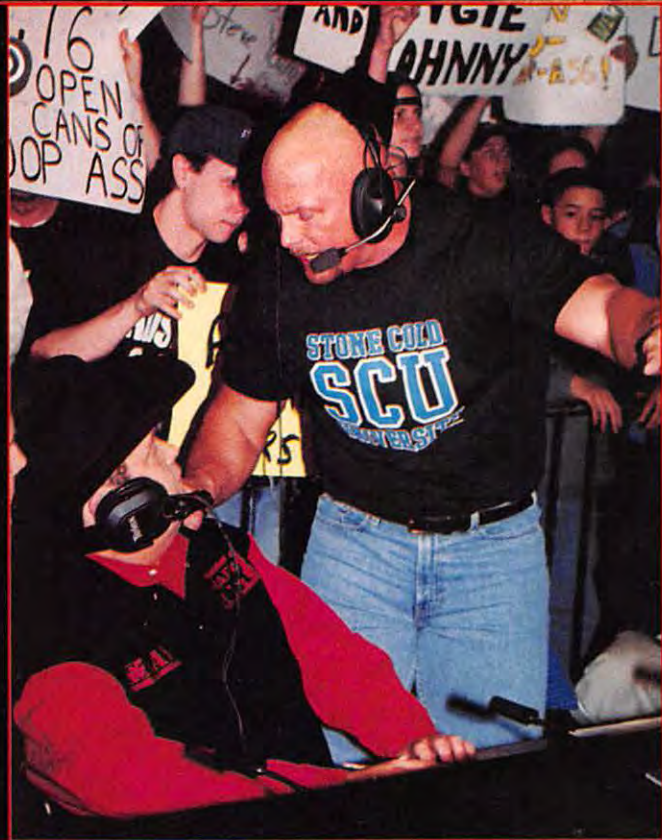
Or Flair might be calculating that Austin is replaceable. If *Smackdown* can survive without him, then why not *Raw*? There will be an infusion of young talent into both brands over the coming months. Any one of those new additions could become a breakout star as Austin did in 1997. Brock Lesnar could pull a Goldberg. If that doesn't happen, perhaps Flair could woo someone from *Smackdown*, preferably someone McMahon has been grooming in Austin's absence.

The loss of Austin would be a huge blow to *Raw* and the WWF as a whole. With the rise of Triple-H, The Rock, and Kurt Angle in recent years, however, the WWF isn't totally dependent on

What a bully! Austin loves to humiliate the ones whom he hates. Remember the picture of Austin tossing Vinnie Mac into a river after beating him in an arm-wrestling match (above)? Heck, Austin even likes to push around his friends on occasion. Isn't Jim Ross (right) supposed to be one of his closest confidantes?



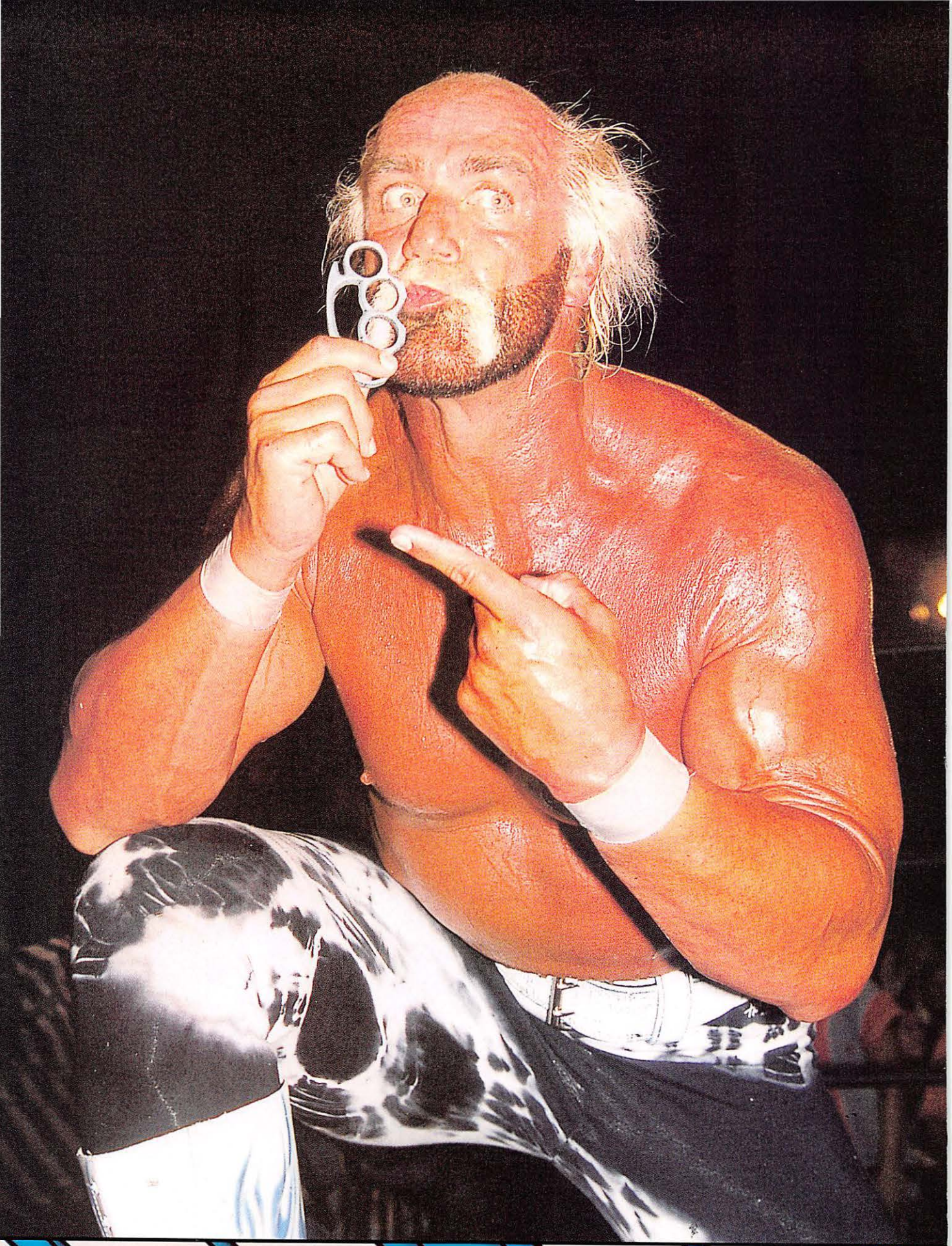
Austin and Flair have had issues in the past. Nine years ago in WCW, they feuded. Flair was the established superstar then, while Austin was still on his way up the ladder. In 2002, Austin is the big star, while Flair could get a lot of support as the aging legend who refuses to back down from the top guy.



"Stone-Cold" anymore. *Raw* isn't that dependent, either.

"Why's everybody cryin' and whinin' because 'Stone-Cold' ain't playin' fair?" retorted Austin. "Hell, son, I never claimed to play fair. I just tell everybody that I'm gonna whip a lot of asses. It ain't that complicated. I don't care if Flair is thinkin' about firing me. I'll stun his ass for free."

Austin should consider being fair to Flair. Or he really could have hell to pay. □



His comeback has been nothing short of extraordinary. Who knew he could ever be this popular again, that he could get people to boo The Rock and Triple-H? He could retire now, and his legacy would be safe. We suggest he cross five more things off his to-do list before he puts away the red and yellow for good

What's Left?

Hulk Hogan's Five Remaining Tasks!

By Frank Krewda

HULK HOGAN IS a lot like broadcaster Howard Cosell: You either like him or you don't. Few of us are indifferent about Hogan. And no matter which side of the fence you fall on, you'll be able to find plenty of evidence to support your argument.

On the "pro" side, Hogan has always been a larger-than-life character. At the height of his massive popularity, which came in the mid-to-late-1980s, he put professional wrestling on his shoulders and lifted it to new heights—with some help from a guy named Vince McMahon, of course.

On the "con" side, most of Hogan's positive contribu-

tions to the sport took place more than a decade ago. Since then, critics have assailed him for yielding his political clout backstage. They've accused him of being selfish and of holding young talent down, and point to his in-ring limitations as evidence enough Hogan doesn't belong at the top of anybody's card.

Fans have debated these points for years, and the argument could rage on for several more. Ironically, however, while the fans decide on his legacy, Hogan is enjoying unexpected popularity during his current run in the WWF. Perhaps it's nostalgia, or maybe it's the fact that wrestling fans realize they

could be taking their last look at a true wrestling legend.

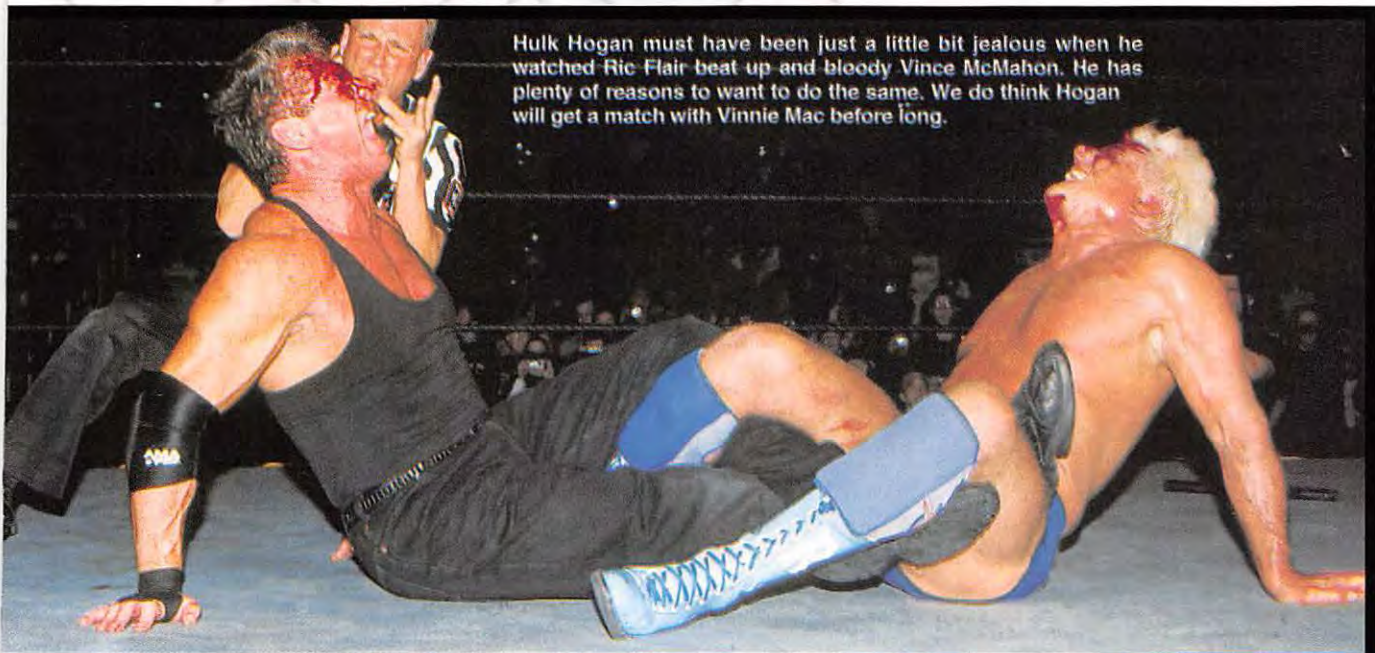
Whatever the reason, even his most ardent critics would probably prefer to see Hulk Hogan end his career on an up note, rather than see him limp away from the industry he helped define.

With that in mind, here are five things THE WRESTLER feels Hogan must accomplish in order to cement his icon status:

★ HUMILIATE VINCE

Who was really behind the WWF's surge in the mid-1980s? Hogan is always quick to credit Vince McMahon for jump-starting his career. No doubt Vince handed

Hulk Hogan must have been just a little bit jealous when he watched Ric Flair beat up and bloody Vince McMahon. He has plenty of reasons to want to do the same. We do think Hogan will get a match with Vinnie Mac before long.





Hogan picked up a pretty impressive victory over Rikishi before he became the undisputed WWF champion. He could really use some more impressive wins against other stars on Rikishi's level and above Rikishi's level, and he needs to get them while defending that WWF championship. He doesn't want his last run as WWF champ to be looked upon as a bust.



The Rock and the "Hulkster" are friends for now, but they have both said publicly that there will come a time when Hogan will have to go one-on-one with "The Great One" again. The pressure will be on him to beat Rock the next time.

Hogan the ball back in 1983, but Hogan's been running with it ever since. After 19 years, Hogan must be tired of showing so much deference to McMahon. And the two of them aren't getting along particularly well these days.

"It's only natural for Hogan to feel somewhat indebted to Mr. McMahon," said announcer Jerry Lawler. "But as a wrestler, you start to wonder at some point, when does that feeling wear off? You begin to resent the association. Larry Zbyszko went through it with Bruno Sammartino and we all remember what happened there. Imagine how Hogan must feel after having his name attached to Vince McMahon's for all these years."

No doubt, Hogan would love to shed that yoke. He hates listening to McMahon tell everyone that he created him. Unlike Zbyszko, Hogan would have the fans squarely behind him. Squashing Vince would end the association once and for all, and you have to believe an in-ring showdown between the two is in the works.

★PUT TOGETHER A RESPECTABLE WWF TITLE REIGN

Ric Flair has often said that winning a world title is the easy part, while keeping it is much tougher. At this stage of his career, a protracted run as the undisputed WWF champion might be unrealistic for Hogan, but a decent reign would silence the naysayers who feel he's too old to compete with the young lions.

So far, Hogan has done the "easy" part by defeating Triple-H at Backlash to win the belt. Now the challenge really begins. Can Hogan stave off a roster full of hungry young challengers?

"Obviously, the odds aren't in Hogan's favor," said commentator Michael Cole. "When you look at a Brock Lesnar or Edge, not to mention the guys already at the top of the card, you realize that Hogan faces an uphill battle."

"But there's something to be said for experience and ring savvy. Like him or not, Hulk Hogan hasn't remained in the business for this long by accident. He's a survivor who's still in excellent physical condition."

What he'll need to accomplish this goal are convincing wins over men like Chris Jericho, The Undertaker, Rob Van Dam, and maybe Steve Austin. It won't be easy.

★BEAT THE ROCK

While Hogan won the hearts of the fans and home viewers at WrestleMania X8, The Rock won the match. By pinfall. Cleanly. And even though the two quasi-rivals kissed and made up, and eventually partnered up to battle the NWO, when fans recall the Match of the Century, they'll also remember that Hogan came up a little bit short when it really counted. Add to this drama the fact that The Rock has already surpassed Hogan in terms of

crossover appeal, and you can understand why defeating The Rock one-two-three in the ring would be a monumental boost to his legacy.

"When you talk about recognizable wrestlers, Hulk Hogan, The Rock, and Steve Austin come to mind immediately," said WWF commentator Jim Ross. "Staying near the top of that list is important to all three men, especially Hogan, who was a real pioneer in that department. Believe me, his match with The Rock may not have had title implications, but it was a career-defining match for both men, and Hogan lost. Quite frankly, I expect him to do everything in his being to avenge that loss before his wrestling days are through. Nobody wants to be remembered as a loser."

★ MAKE A RESPECTABLE MOVIE

Speaking of crossover appeal, now that The Rock has opened the door for professional wrestlers in Hollywood, Hogan might want to try his hand at movies once more. Only this time, he should hold out for a respectable role in a respectable film. Granted, *The Mummy Returns* and *The Scorpion King* will never be confused with *The Godfather* and *The Godfather II*, but *Mr. Nanny* and *Suburban Commando* will never be confused with *The Mummy Returns* and *The Scorpion King*, either.

Hogan's problem in the past was that he basically played a thinly disguised Hulk Hogan in his movies. He was an over-the-top cartoonish character playing other over-the-top cartoonish characters. As *The Scorpion King*,



Near the end of his run in WCW, Hogan was feuding with Billy Kidman and not exactly getting an overwhelmingly positive response from fans. He had burned himself out. He had better not make the same mistake in the WWF. The time to get out might come sooner than he realizes.

The Rock made people forget that he was a wrestler.

If you look at how well Hogan has adapted his character over the years, a legitimate role in a big-time Hollywood production doesn't seem completely out of the question, does it?

★ QUIT WHILE HE'S ON TOP

The last thing any of us wants to see is the boring Hogan that languished in WCW at the end. That's why it makes perfect sense for him to make his run, then bow out gracefully before the hands of time and younger competition force him out. For all his juice, Hogan remains a few steps slower than most of the other WWF superstars at this point. His legdrop seems very outdated as a finisher, while his bald (not shaved) pate belies the hip image he effectively portrays.

"I'm not ready to bury the guy," said one insider who spoke under the condition of anonymity. "But he's not the same wrestler he was just a few years ago. I mean, he's doing an amazing job of feeding off the crowd and inspiring the crowd, and he obviously has enough left to be a relevant part of the sport. But he has to keep in mind that this latest wave of 'Hulkamania' won't last forever. People could get sick of him again very quickly."

We concur. That's why this is probably the most important remaining task for Hogan. □

Hogan's last major acting venture was in TV, not the movies. He was the star of *Thunder In Paradise*, a show on which Sting occasionally guest-starred. Compared to some of the other things he has done, it wasn't a bad role for him. Can he follow The Rock's lead and land a key role in which he isn't basically playing his wrestling character?



JEFF PETERSON'S



MIRACLE COMEBACK

"I THANK GOD, I THANK MY FAMILY, I THANK THE FANS"

By Harry Burkett

"ASSUMING I'LL BE cancer-free in the near future, doctors have said it could be anytime between six and 18 months," Jeff Peterson told *THE WRESTLER* nearly two years ago. "I'll return sooner if I can, but you never know. Time changes everything."

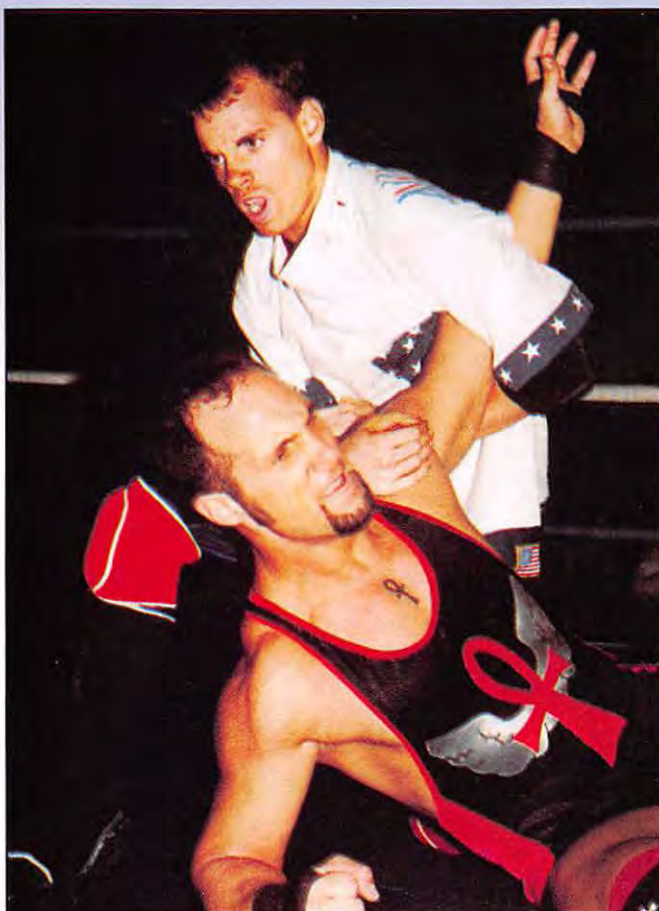
But time did not change Peterson's determination regarding a return to the squared circle. When that story was published in the December 2000 issue, Peterson could barely muster the strength to visit an amusement park or handle any kind of physical activity. A wrestling comeback seemed out of the question to everyone—except Jeff Peterson.

The "All-American" had already embarked on a promising wrestling career when he began suffering from shortness of breath, fatigue, and cold-like symptoms in January 2000. He was diagnosed with leukemia on April 14 of that year. His senior prom and high school graduation became secondary compared to his mere survival. He underwent intense chemotherapy, operations, and lengthy hospital stays at Tampa's Moffitt Cancer Center. Several grueling months

He was a blossoming indy star at age 18. He made it to the Super 8. He survived cancer. What was left for Jeff Peterson to do? A gutsy comeback to the sport he loves

For two years, Jeff Peterson waited for the night on which he could step back into the ring and wrestle (opposite page). Two long, difficult years. And in April, with his cancer in remission, he finally did. There wasn't much doubt that he was going to beat Ruffhouse Rivera (below), but everyone was worried about whether he was really ready. He proved to them that he was.





Three years ago, trying to keep pace with Christopher Daniels was the type of thing Peterson worried about a lot (above). That and trying to turn his frog splash into a five-star frog splash (right). His life changed dramatically in 2000. But now it looks like this story could have a very happy ending.



later, doctors informed Peterson that his cancer had gone into remission.

"From the time I was diagnosed with my cancer, I set a goal that I would rise above the hurdle that God put in front of me to relive my dream as a pro wrestler," stated Peterson. "At first I couldn't see the ring at the end of the tunnel, but as my treatments came to an end, that tunnel was wide open and I could finally see that ring again."

Peterson began to get into shape simply by becoming more active. He worked out with a local high school wrestling team. He also coached third- to fifth-graders in a number of sports at the YMCA.

Probably the most unusual mode of training occurred at his father's nightclub, Norm's Place, in Clearwater, Florida. Peterson maintained a busy pace behind the bar, ran as he mopped the floor, carried chairs, and lifted beer kegs. Watching *Rocky* movies and listening to "Eye Of The Tiger" kept him positive. Peterson envisioned Sylvester Stallone punching that frozen side of beef in *Rocky* as he performed arm exercises with cases of beer and buckets of ice.

Peterson also needed to hone his ring skills. He spent time at the WrestlePlex, home of IPW Hardcore Wrestling's training school. Veterans such as Mike Sullivan, Rastaman, and Pat Powers were especially helpful. Seijin Akki, whom Peterson helped train, was also eager to assist in his friend's quest.

Finally, Peterson notified his uncle, ECWA promoter Jim Kettner, of his decision to make a comeback. Next, it was Kettner's decision as to whether Peterson's comeback would happen in the ECWA. If Peterson suffered an injury in a premature comeback, Kettner would blame himself.

"We went back and forth about whether this comeback match should happen," recalled Kettner. "My main concern was his health, both physically and mentally. Could he actually do a full match? Yet I knew if he succeeded, it would be one of the proudest moments of his life. But if he didn't succeed, or didn't live up to people's expectations, that might hurt his emotional state."

Peterson was a special guest at many ECWA cards, including March's Super 8, where he was showered with applause. That warm reception boosted his confidence for his upcoming match, scheduled for April 6 at St. Matthew's Parish Center in Wilmington, Delaware. His opponent would be Ruffhouse Rivera.

"I second-guessed my decision right up until that very night," remembered Kettner. "Watching him behind the

"From the time I was diagnosed with my cancer, I set a goal that I would rise above the hurdle that God put in front of me to relive my dream as a pro wrestler. At first I couldn't see the ring at the end of the tunnel, but as my treatments came to an end, that tunnel was wide open and I could finally see that ring again."

curtain, and seeing the look on his face as they announced his name ... it made all my fears go away. He was ready to return and do what he loved: wrestling in front of the people."

Peterson received a standing ovation. With cheers and pure emotion fueling him, Peterson surprised Rivera with a blistering offense. The "All-American" opted for a more grounded attack compared to his high-flying tactics of the past. But neither Rivera nor his ringside cronies took it easy on Peterson. Ryan Wing and Inferno brutalized him at every opportunity.

The outside interference got the fans behind Peterson even more. With his adrenaline surging, he began "hulking up." Watching the entire WrestleMania box set in the hospital was about to pay off. He wobbled Rivera as "Jeffmania" ran wild in Delaware. Then Peterson did something Hulk Hogan would never do: He climbed to the top rope. One ringside fan was heard to ask, "Is he nuts?!" Peterson launched off the turnbuckle, flattened Rivera with a devastating frog splash, and scored the three-count. The crowd reaction was thunderous.

"The only thing that disappointed me that night was, well, me," said Kettner. "I should have never doubted that Jeff could return. His inspiration to me that evening and to the entire locker room was his emotional connection with the fans. That's something that can't be measured in dollars or high spots."

Peterson felt good after the match. After two years out of the ring, Peterson would need to keep working to build up his stamina, but all in all, he thought his cardiovascular training had helped him greatly. He didn't suffer any injuries, either. He was on an emotional high for the rest of the night.

"I wasn't sore until the next morning," said Peterson. "But it was a good sore because I was so proud of what I had done. So it was basically 'glory pain.'"

At an NSW show in Zephyrhills, Florida, he participated in a three-way match also involving Scotty Hotshot and Shifty. In addition, he has been refereeing cruiserweight bouts for IPW. Outside of wrestling, Peterson is now part owner of Norm's Place and is pursuing a physical education and coaching degree at St. Petersburg College.

"I wouldn't have survived 10 near-death experiences in the hospital if God didn't have a plan for me," he surmised. "I also believe that I've had two angels at my side, my deceased brothers, Jake and Jamey. I thank God, I thank my family, I thank the fans."

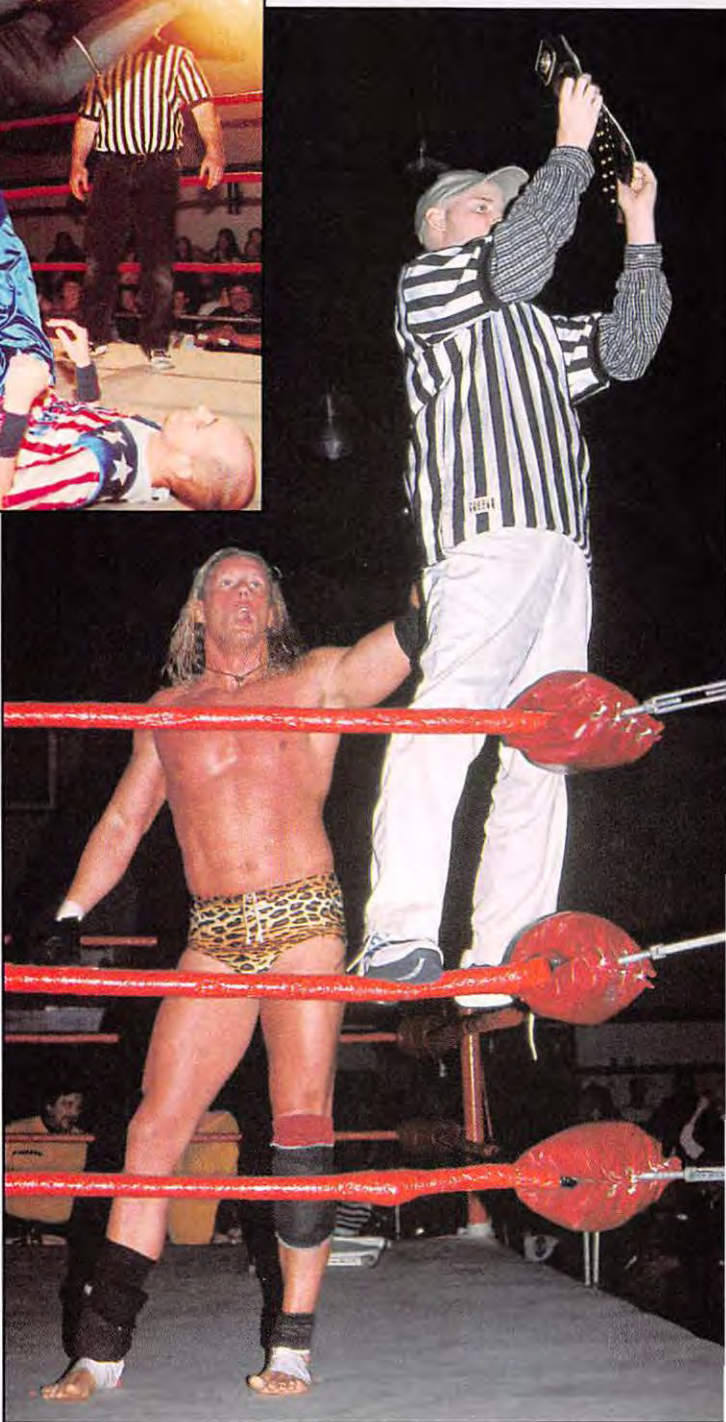
If Peterson's leukemia stays in remission for another

year, he will be considered cured of cancer. No matter what the future might hold, he will continue to fight ... and inspire. □

[Editor's note: Jeff Peterson was admitted into the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa on April 30 for a cancer relapse. As of press time, he is currently undergoing chemotherapy and is seeking a bone marrow donor.]



The decision to let him return to competition in the ECWA in April was a very difficult for promoter Jim Kettner, who just happens to be Peterson's uncle, but he knew he did the right thing as soon as he heard the ring announcer call out his name.



Peterson regularly appeared at ECWA shows while he was undergoing cancer treatments and was given a chance to hold up the heavy-weight title belt by then-champ Cheetah Master on one special night. He got a lot of help and encouragement from a lot of people close to him as he prepared for his improbable comeback.



ANGLE

A 10-YEAR CAREER IN 30 MONTHS

In October 1999, a clean-cut, clean-living former Olympian made his debut on WWF TV. Less than three years later, Kurt Angle has done more than most wrestlers accomplish in their entire careers. And he's just getting started

By Dan Murphy

IN MAY, RICK Steamboat was slated to be among the charter inductees into the Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame in Schenectady, New York. "The Dragon's" pro career spanned more than 18 years and was highlighted by a two-plus-month reign as NWA World heavyweight champion in 1989. Throw in one WWF Intercontinental title and you have a pretty nice career.

Nearly eight years after his retirement, Steamboat still is considered one of pro wrestling's greatest stars; his status as a Hall of Famer is uncontested. If Kurt Angle maintains the pace he's on, the Hall of Fame in upstate New York is going to have to build him his own wing. Maybe his own damn three-story building!

Holding the WWF Intercontinental and European titles at the same time was Angle's first major accomplishment in the pro game. Compared to everything he has accomplished since, that now looks rather insignificant.



Many feel Angle has had his best matches in the WWF with The Rock. They have a special chemistry in the ring. Then again, Angle has good chemistry with a lot of opponents. And although Rock has gotten the best of Angle more often than not, it was Rock whom Angle beat to win his first WWF World title.



Of course, wrestling has changed dramatically since Steamboat cut his teeth in the 1970s territorial system. Back then, it took more than a witty promo to earn a title shot, and most champions were only required to defend their titles once every 30 days. As a point of comparison, from 1963 through 1993,

the WWF World title changed hands only 26 times; since the beginning of 1998, the same title has switched hands 28 times.

Yes, wrestling storylines move much faster today than they did in the past. We need exciting developments in a superstar's career once or

WHAT THE **NEXT** 30 MONTHS MIGHT HOLD FOR ANGLE

These days, it's just about impossible to make an accurate prediction about the future of wrestling. Who could have foreseen the acquisition of WCW by the WWF in 2001, for example, or that Hulk Hogan would be wearing the WWF World title again in 2002?

Rather than speculate on what specifically Kurt Angle might or might not achieve over the next few years, here is a short list of some of the goals he has yet to accomplish, as well as some pitfalls he must try to avoid:

KURT ANGLE'S TO-DO LIST:

1. Headline WrestleMania. For all of his accomplishments, this is the one goal Angle has yet to do, and it's what every WWF superstar hopes to do before he retires. WrestleMania is the grandest stage of all, and it carries the biggest payday in the business. Securing the main event of 'Mania would be a career pinnacle.

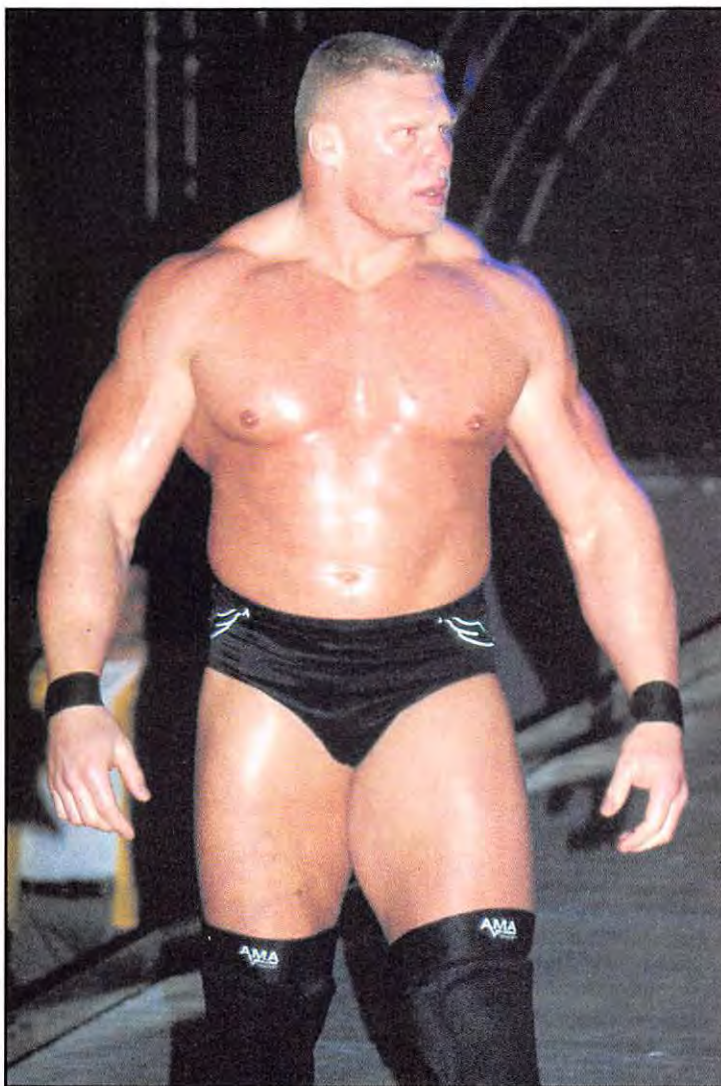
2. Win the Royal Rumble. More than anything else, Angle craves respect. Outlasting 29 other competitors in the Rumble would bring him the sort of respect he lusts, and it springboards the winner into the main event of WrestleMania. This would be the perfect way for our Olympic hero to cross two items off his to-do list at once.

3. Pin Hulk Hogan. Hogan is the legendary Old West gunfighter. Every young greenhorn wants a chance to make a name for himself by taking out the legend. And Triple-H wasn't able to do it in his first shot. So there's even more incentive for Angle.

TRAPS TO AVOID:

1. Becoming the spoiler. As Vince McMahon's strongest ally, Angle runs the risk of becoming a spoiler for the boss. Rather than climb the ladder of contention, Angle could become that permanent rung that other contenders must climb over in order to get a title shot. Angle must make his own decisions and not be persuaded to take matches that can't improve his position in the rankings.

2. Brock Lesnar. Here's a natural rivalry if there ever was one. Olympic gold medalist vs. former NCAA champion. It'd be an amateur wrestling aficionado's dream match. If Angle lets his ego get the best of him and worries more about how he compares to Lesnar, or if one of them somehow crosses the brand extension split for a match, Angle has plenty to lose and nothing to gain, at least until Lesnar establishes himself as an elite player in the WWF.



Is Lesnar looming for Angle?

3. Stephanie McMahon. Yes, she will be back on TV at some point. The entire Angle-McMahon-Helmsley triangle remains unresolved, and that's best for both Angle and Triple-H. Angle should have a nice heart-to-heart with Chris Jericho if the thought of hooking up with "The Billion-Dollar Princess" ever crosses his mind again.

—Dan Murphy

twice per week every week. There aren't many slow builds to big matches. Still, Angle's accomplishments in a mere 30 months are nothing short of remarkable.

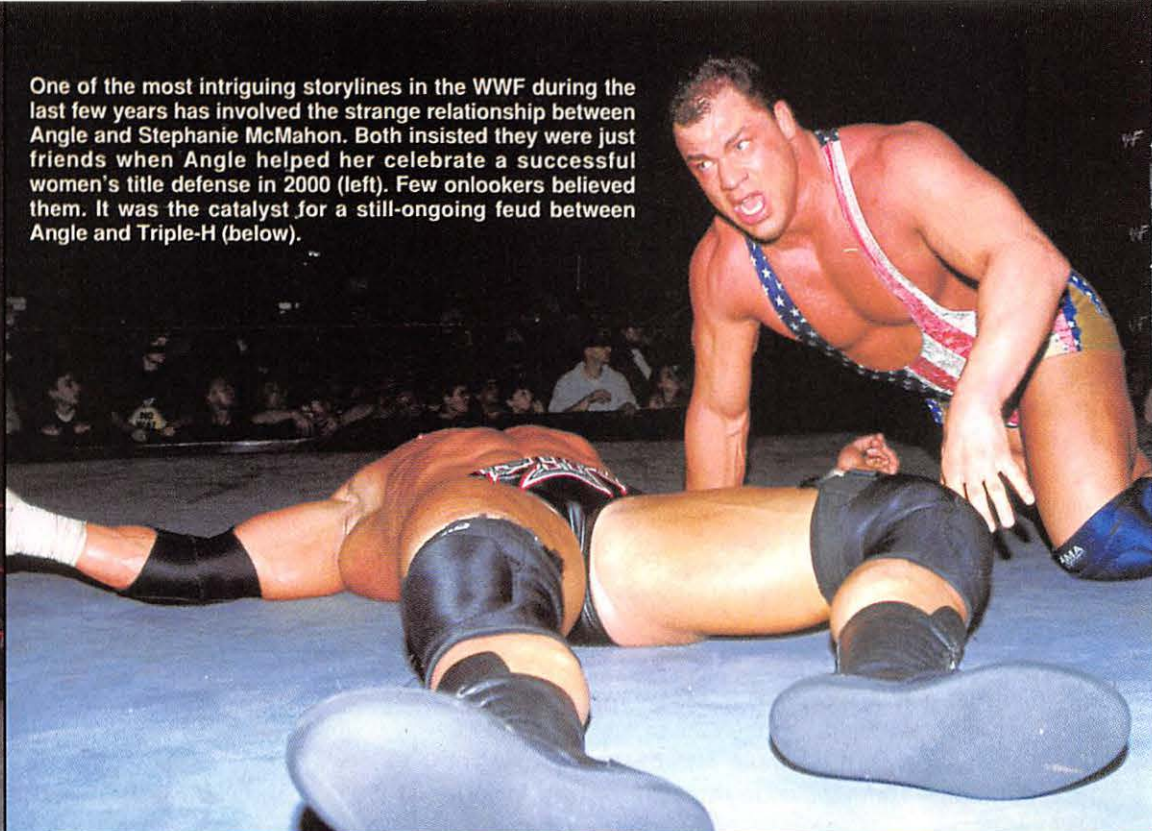
In his first year as a full-time wrestler in the WWF (his only previous pro experience was in a WWF developmental territory in Memphis), Angle managed to win both the European and Intercontinental titles (he held them simultaneously for more than a month). He lost both titles without being pinned or submitting, then went on to win the 2000 King of the

Ring tournament. In October 2000, Angle won the WWF World title and managed to hold on to that championship for more than four months. He followed it up with a two-week second reign in 2001.

When Vince McMahon purchased WCW, Angle became the first WWF competitor to win the WCW World title. In the summer of 2001, his feud with Steve Austin made Angle the most beloved superstar in the WWF. That fall, he also briefly captured both the WCW U.S. and WWF hardcore titles. (Okay, so he has yet to capture the WWF tag team title—

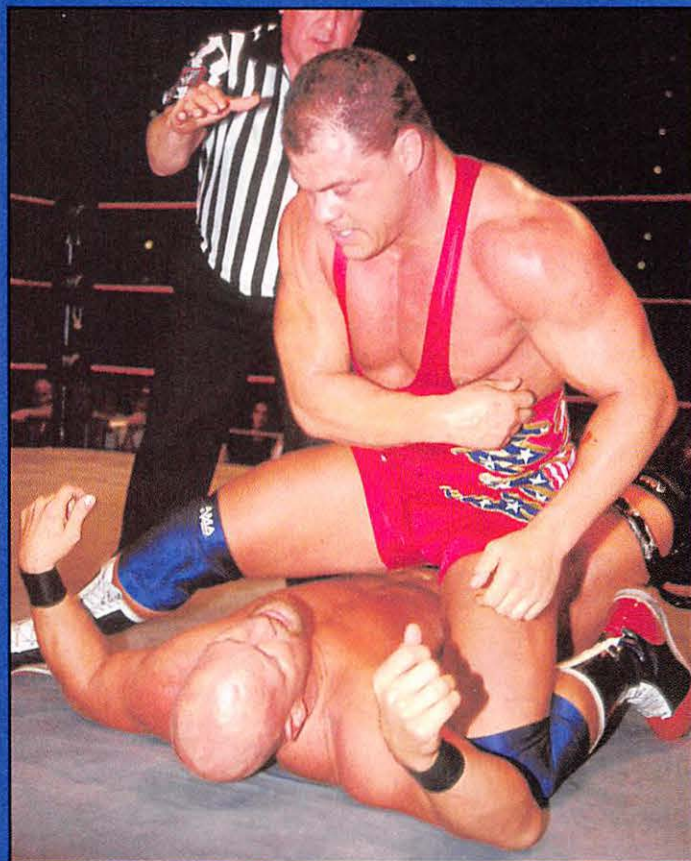


One of the most intriguing storylines in the WWF during the last few years has involved the strange relationship between Angle and Stephanie McMahon. Both insisted they were just friends when Angle helped her celebrate a successful women's title defense in 2000 (left). Few onlookers believed them. It was the catalyst for a still-ongoing feud between Angle and Triple-H (below).



what's wrong with him?)

Angle was also ranked number one in the 2001 "PWI 500." And how about *PWI* Achievement Awards? Angle was the 2000 Rookie of the Year,



Angle vs. Austin was a very hot feud in the WWF last year, and it gave Angle a chance to show everyone that he could play the role of the conquering hero quite well, too.

Most Hated Wrestler of 2000, battled Triple-H in 2000's Feud of the Year, was the 2001 Inspirational Wrestler of the Year, and was a runner-up for Wrestler of the Year in both 2000 and 2001. He was also third runner-up for Most Improved Wrestler in 2001 and somehow managed to finish second in Most Hated balloting and third in Most Popular voting in the same year, 2001.

Pace of today's wrestling storylines aside, there can be little doubt that Angle has packed a 10-year career (and an incredible one at that!) into the space of barely 30 months in the WWF. The self-professed Olympic hero's pro career has been unparalleled.

"There's no doubt about it, Kurt Angle is the kind of athlete that only comes around once in a lifetime," said Jim Ross. "He got involved with the WWF at a very exciting time, and he's seen a lot of great opportunities come his way. It's a testament to his skill that Kurt has been able to take advantage of every opportunity that's come along."

The transition from the Greco-Roman amateur wars to the pro ring is a difficult one. When Angle joined the WWF, he was encouraged to add additional bulk while maintaining his stamina and agility. He was forced to "unlearn" the skills that earned him Olympic gold and to learn an almost entirely new repertoire. Past Olympians such as Brad Rheingans and Chris Taylor tried to make the transition, and neither came close to Angle's level of success. Only The Iron Sheik, an Olympic bronze medalist, came somewhat close, but which of the two do you think is the better athlete?

Just as impressively, Angle quickly mastered the fine art of cutting a promo and cultivating a

marketable personality.

"You can be the greatest wrestler in the world, but if you can't get the crowd to care about what you have to say, you're never going to make it in this business, let alone in the WWF," said Jim Cornette, owner of Ohio Valley Wrestling, a WWF developmental territory. "We were lucky enough to have Kurt down here for a while last year, teaming with his brother, Eric. As soon as the cameras started rolling, Kurt came alive. He's a natural performer and a natural athlete."

With his three "I's," integrity, intelligence, and intensity, Angle instantly irritated audiences. And he loved doing it. Then, after establishing himself as the clown prince of the WWF, Angle managed to ratchet up his intensity and retain credibility in bloody battles against The Rock, Chris Benoit, Austin, and Triple-H. The shift from comic relief to serious competitor

has been a stumbling block for many wrestlers, including Edge, Jericho, and fellow Olympian Mark Henry. Angle was not only able to make that jump, he was also able to

The Olympic gold medalist became the point man for Vince McMahon in his war with Shane McMahon and the Alliance in 2001. He bloodied and beat Shane himself at King of the Ring (right) and dominated one of WCW's strongest weapons, Booker T, in an extended feud (below).

become the Fed's top babyface in the summer of 2001. As evidenced by Austin's aborted heel turn, Angle might well be the most versatile competitor in the WWF.

"Kurt Angle is, in a lot of ways, the Roddy Piper of the 21st century," said WWF expert Thomas Piliard. "The fans love to hate him, but deep down, he's one of their favorites. People respect his accomplishments in the Olympics and how hard he has worked to make the transition to the WWF. They may chant, 'You suck!' in time to his entrance music today, but they would be willing to accept him as a top fan favorite tomorrow. They love being entertained by the guy. You can just tell."

Fan favorite or heel, comedy wrestler or serious contender, Angle has been able to pull it all off. And

consider this scary fact: At 33 years of age, he might well have another 10 very good years ahead of him.

Somebody call Schenectady. Construction on the Kurt Angle Annex better start soon. □





little man with a huge task

Can **Rey Mysterio Jr.** lead
the lucha revolution a third time?

The WWF has repeatedly failed to get a high-flying cruiserweight division off the ground. Can Rey Mysterio Jr., who was a superstar in ECW and WCW, finally make it happen?

By Dave Lenker

WHEN REY MISTERIO JR. signed with the WWF this spring, at least one key question passed through the minds of many who heard about the deal being done: Which Rey Mysterio Jr. would actually appear in the WWF? Would it be Rey Mysterio Jr., the masked "King Of Mystery" who jump-started cruiserweight competition in ECW and WCW? Or would it be little Rey-Rey, the streetwise yo-boy who likes to talk smack?

Knowing the WWF, we'll probably get a little of both in the next few months and beyond. The Federation powers-that-be have an uncanny ability to take a wrestler's existing persona, accentuate the more colorful aspects, and minimize the blander/weaker ones. Assuming it's done right, we'll probably get Mysterio the serious championship contender combined with a lit-



Rey Mysterio Jr. and Dean Malenko changed WCW and changed the way a lot of American wrestling fans looked at cruiserweights by putting together an amazingly exciting series of matches five years ago. Asking Rey to lead a similar "revolution" in the WWF is asking a lot, but if anyone is going to be up to the task, it's Mysterio.

beat Heavy Metal and Psicosis. Bischoff spotted a missing ingredient that would enable him to present a product fresher than and superior to the WWF's: Mexico's Lucha Libre style. He signed Misterio shortly thereafter.

The 5'3", 140-pound star made an immediate impact by pinning Dean Malenko for the WCW cruiserweight title on July 8. The Misterio-Malenko rivalry headlined the cruiserweight division, with the belt switching back and forth, but with Misterio finally emerging on top.

Misterio and Malenko, along with an influx of Luchadores, stressed WCW's innovative athleticism, making the WWF seem weak in comparison. The sporting dimension of the cruiserweight division was counterbalanced by the New World Order invasion, which provided more than enough violence and soap opera to lure casual fans. For diehards, WCW's cruiserweight division was North America's last remnant of straightforward wrestling on a national scale.

How would a Misterio-led Lucha revolution fit in the WWF? Does the Federation even want to have a division that favors substance over style?

"No, I'm warning everyone not to fall for it yet," said WWF analyst Thomas Pilliard. "I'm going against all the predictions of an athletically based cruiserweight division that really gets pushed because all I have to do is look at past history. The WWF has never put its muscle behind a junior heavy-

weight division, dating back to its decision to let Tatsumi Fujinami keep the belt in Japan in 1980. When they made a token gesture to jump-start it in 1997, they were unwilling to clearly establish a division beyond Taka Michinoku, Brian Christopher, and Essa Rios. Sure, there has been either a light heavyweight or cruiserweight belt since that time, but no deep, competitive division upholding it."

What about the addition of Misterio? Doesn't that mean anything?

"I hope Misterio's arrival will prove me wrong," replied Pilliard. "Only a competi-

tive cruiserweight division will enable the WWF to get its money's worth out of him. They need to get to the point where the cruiserweight title match isn't automatically the first match on the pay-per-view. It has to get pushed to where it's the semi-main event or at least close to that. It would be an utter waste if we saw Misterio facing bigger guys like William Regal, Scott Hall, or The Big Show all the time. They need to sign more Luchadores, guys who've never wrestled in the U.S. before. They've already wasted Spike Dudley. We'll know the Misterio signing is a bust

It was just last year that Misterio had some outstanding matches with Chavo Guerrero Jr., who's now also in the WWF's cruiserweight ranks. By last year, though, Misterio seemed to have lost some of his enthusiasm, and WCW had changed his character for the worse. He's getting to start fresh again in the WWF.

the straight-from-the-barrio attitude.

That approach would fully utilize his athletic potential while keeping him entertaining to a mainstream 2002 audience. In this very magazine, several wrestlers have been hailed as the saviors of the WWF's cruiserweight division, from Taka Michinoku to Dean Malenko to Jerry Lynn. None of those wrestlers succeeded, primarily because the WWF didn't give him a legitimate chance to do so.

Misterio is different. After wrestling in Mexico for five years, he entered ECW in early 1996. There, he engaged in a classic series of matches against long-time rival Psicosis. They were among the first to bring Lucha Libre to an American audience, and it helped ECW to further establish itself as a cutting-edge alternative to the WWF and WCW. ECW also earned some respect by proving it could present true athletic excellence rather than rely solely on hardcore.

The direction of Misterio's career changed in June 1996, when WCW Senior Vice President Eric Bischoff attended Antonio Inoki's World Wrestling Peace Festival in Los Angeles and watched Misterio and Ultimo Dragon

Most cruiserweights hope McMahon will push Misterio heavily, although that would probably mean several more in-ring losses for them. These stars aren't afraid of Misterio overshadowing them. They realize Misterio can boost the entire division and give them more job security.

when he's wrestling for the European title."

Wrestlers inside the WWF tend to be more optimistic than Pilliard. They believe Vince McMahon's ego is the strongest force in the universe. With *Raw* boasting a high-profile hardcore division (as well as the Intercontinental and European titles), McMahon will want *Smackdown*'s cruiserweight division to outshine it. Most cruiserweights hope McMahon will push Misterio heavily, although that would probably mean several more in-ring losses for them. These stars aren't afraid of Misterio overshadowing them. They realize Misterio can boost the entire division and give them more job security.

Even Billy Kidman is enthusiastic about Misterio's arrival. "No one has pushed me harder in the ring than Rey, which means no one has made me better," he said.

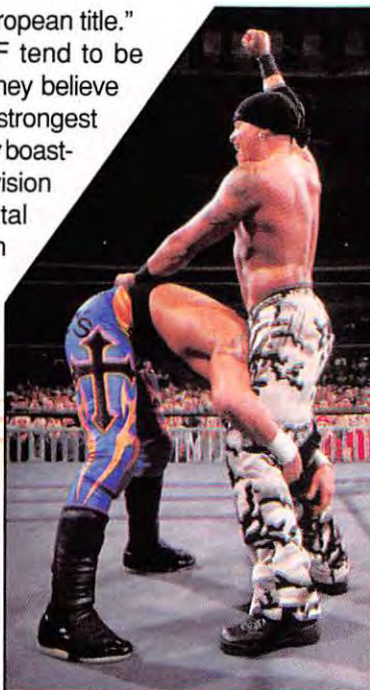
"Rey and I go way back. We were the World tag team champions and the cruiserweight tag team champions in WCW. Now that's something I wouldn't mind seeing: a WWF cruiserweight tag team title. But before Rey and I could think about becoming partners again, we'll probably have to be rivals again. Misterio vs. Malenko made the cruiserweight division important in WCW, and I want Misterio vs. Kidman to do the same thing in the WWF."

Kidman could be the spark to ignite Misterio's talent. Kidman was the first WCW cruiserweight champ to dominate Misterio. Kidman retained the title in singles, three-way, and four-way matches during his four-month reign in 1998-1999. Misterio pulled through, however, and defeated Kidman on March 15, 1999.

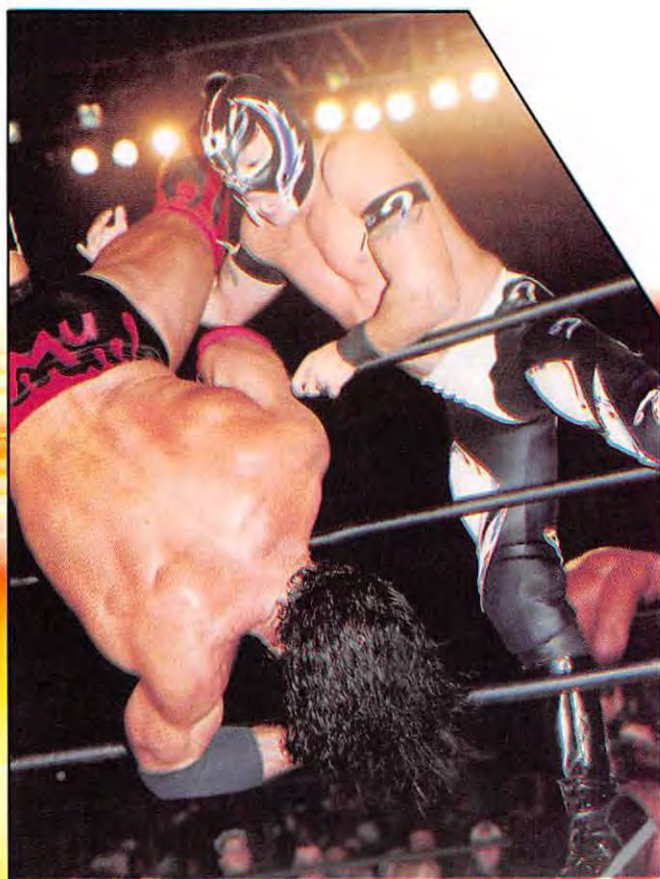
Even if the WWF gets behind Misterio, is he up to the task? Misterio's high-flying style has taken its toll on his knees and ankles, which are quite battered and worn after 12 years in the ring. Will the 2002 Misterio be nearly as good as the 1996 Misterio?

"Since the WWF bought WCW a year ago, Rey has had his longest layoff from full-time competition ever," commented Kidman. "He's been able to rest up and train harder than ever while wrestling a part-time schedule. I hear he's in great shape and looks great in the ring. Mentally, I hope he's there, I hope he's psyched. I think he lost a little of that fire when he was with me and The Filthy Animals. If he goes solo, at least in the beginning, I think he'll be fantastic."

Misterio revolutionized ECW and WCW in the mid-1990s. With a plethora of talented opponents, both new and old, waiting for him, will he revolutionize the WWF? Misterio's success is vital for the cruiserweight division's survival. □



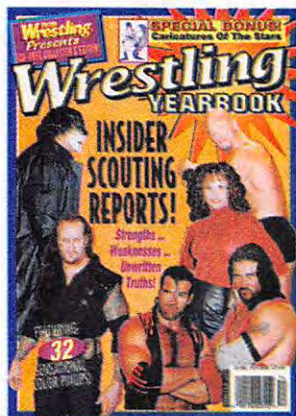
Misterio and Juventud Guerrera combined their innovative approach to aerial wrestling with just a little bit of hardcore when they arrived in ECW (above left). Fans were awestruck. And their amazingly fast-paced, athletic matches in WCW left crowds wanting more (above right). What can Rey do for the WWF's cruiserweight division? Just be himself in the ring.



Misterio scored some exciting upsets against big men when he was in WCW, but putting him in the ring with guys like Scott Hall on even a semi-regular basis turned out to be a colossal mistake. If the WWF insists on booking him against established heavyweights, it won't be getting Rey Jr. at his best.

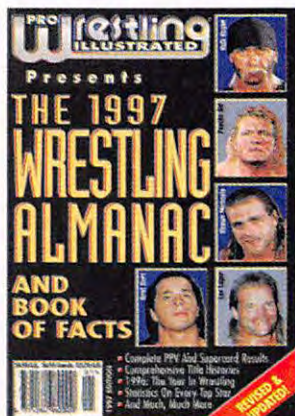
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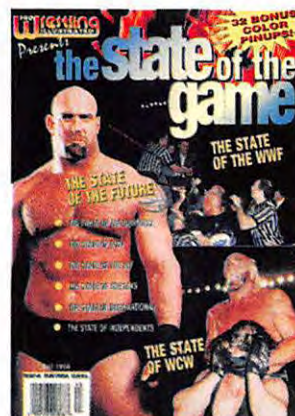
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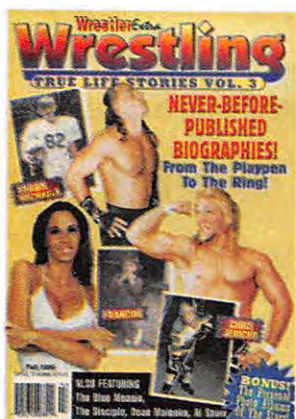
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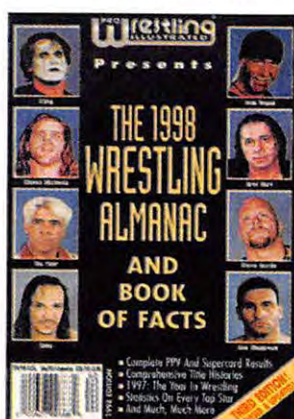
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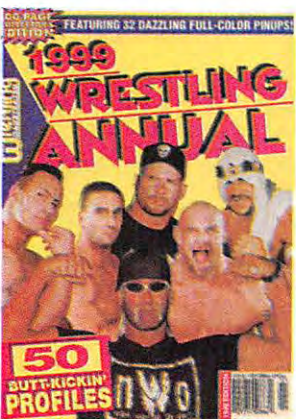
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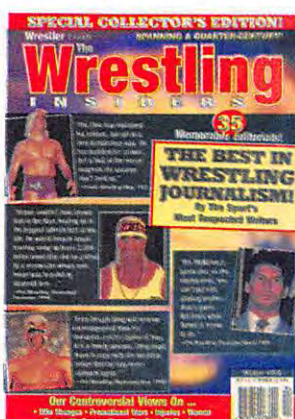
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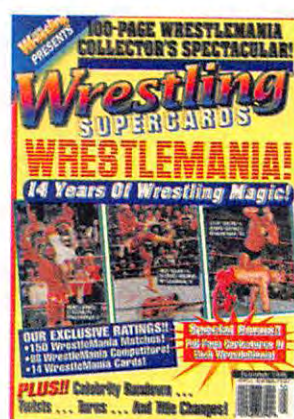
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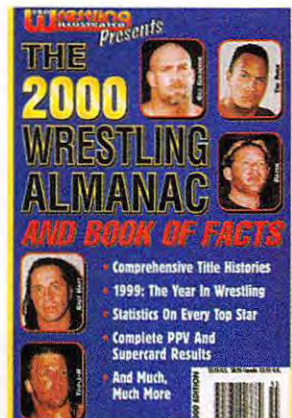
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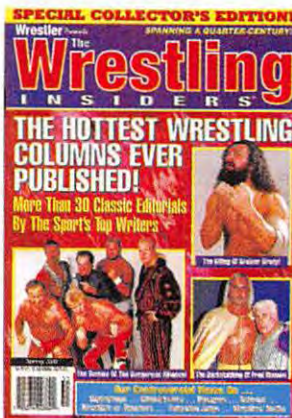
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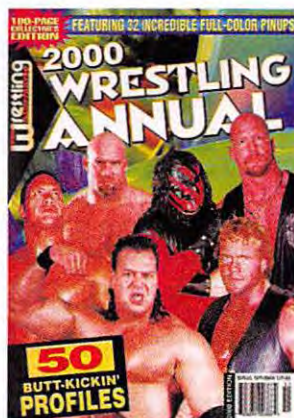
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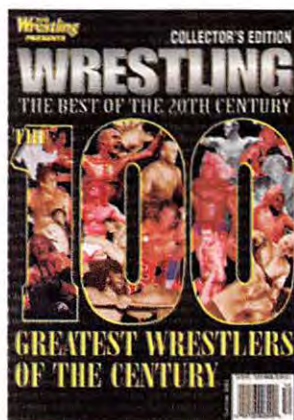
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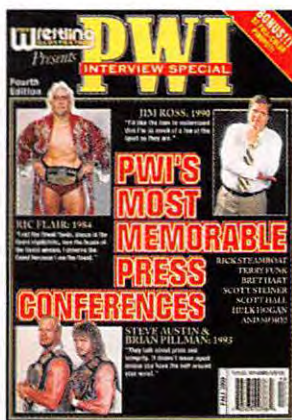
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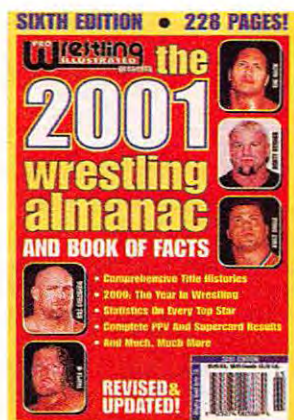
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Completely revised and updated, this sixth annual edition contains more facts, figures, and information than ever before. 228 pages!



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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)



Leviathan has caused a lot of pain for Flash in OVW, and reader Arthur Newton thinks this very dangerous man could be the right man to stand up to Brock Lesnar in the WWF.

QUOTE THE RAVEN

Having a new mix of broadcast teams is a wonderful benefit of the WWF's brand extension. I love the pairing of Jonathan Coachman and Raven! Coachman is the consummate straight man, capable of solid play-by-play, while Raven is one of the wittiest announcers I've heard. He makes clever, subtle comments in a seemingly effortless manner. Raven hasn't adopted the Scott Hudson approach of trying too hard and making his commentary seem forced and insincere. Besides, who else would quote Oscar Wilde?

Coachman and Raven remind me of another great broadcast team from the mid-1990s, Gorilla Monsoon and Johnny Polo. I wonder why. I'll never forget Polo challenging Monsoon to a game of basketball. Thanks to some clever editing, Monsoon appeared to hit nothin' but net with every shot!

I think Coachman and Raven are capable of providing the same kind of funny moments.

RAY MARTINEZ
San Francisco, CA

LESNAR IN DEEP?

Brock Lesnar is on the verge of running roughshod in the WWF, but none of the veterans is taking him seriously. Maybe so-called superstars are afraid to go after Lesnar because they aren't familiar with his capabilities.

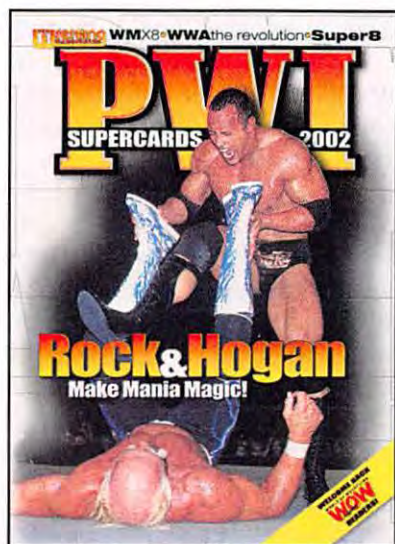
Reading your story on Leviathan ("OVW Monster Leviathan: 'He'll Be The Most Dangerous Man In Wrestling!'") in the July 2002 issue made me think of something. Leviathan would be the perfect man to straighten out Lesnar. In my opinion, Leviathan is stronger and meaner, and he must have gotten to know him pretty well when Lesnar was in OVW. And don't forget, "The Demon Of The Deep" has already held his own against The Undertaker and Kane. Flash was correct in pointing that out in your story. I truly believe Leviathan will go places in the wrestling business, and maybe it will be at Lesnar's expense.

ARTHUR NEWTON
Cincinnati, OH ☐

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THIS Month In...

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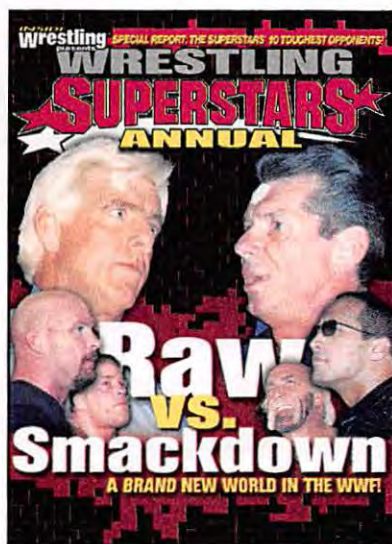


Spring is over, summer is here, and that means we have survived another wild supercard season. This year, a new player entered the picture, as the World Wrestling All-Stars presented their first U.S. PPV, **REVOLUTION**. Of course, it wouldn't be a supercard season without the annual **SUPER 8 TOURNAMENT**. And then there's the supercard of supercards, **WRESTLEMANIA**. This year's event was bigger and maybe even better than the rest. We have in-depth coverage of all these events ... If that wasn't enough, we also present a "Press Conference" with **X-PAC**. He let us in on the **NWO's** future plans!

All this—and much more—in the August 2002 issue of **PWI**

NOW ON SALE!

WRESTLING SUPERSTARS ANNUAL



Here's something for you to try: Pick your favorite superstars and make a list of their 10 toughest opponents. Sounds easy, right? Think again. Narrowing the list down to 10 is tough, and some wrestlers have a tougher time with guys who aren't huge stars than they do with the all-time greats. We've put together an analysis of the top 10 opponents for 40 of the biggest stars in the world today. See if you agree with our picks! ... Don't miss our special in-depth analysis of the WWF's brand extension. Who got the best of the draft? Who were the big winners and losers? What does the future hold? We'll tell you all this and more!

All this—and much more—in the 2002 edition of **Wrestling Superstars Annual**

NOW ON SALE!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)



Some fans insisted that obnoxious manager Kenny Bolin and Synn made for an odd twosome. Would you believe that Bolin now has an alliance with Mark Cuban, the owner of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks? He has videotape evidence to prove it.

he wasn't there," said one promoter. "Instead, he went out of his way to show up. He's a first-class individual."

Ohio Valley Wrestling has seen its share of controversy in recent months. On April 5, "Nightmare" Danny Davis returned to the squared circle to team with **The Lords of the Ring**, **Rob Conway** and **Nick Dinsmore**, against **Doug Basham**, **Victoria**, and **The Damaja** at OVW's "Spring Breakout" supercard. At stake was controlling interest in OVW. After a wild match, Davis managed to hit Basham, his own nephew, with a variation of the Stone-Cold stunner to score the three-count.

In other "Spring Breakout" matches, **Leviathan** absolutely obliterated **Johnny Jeter** and **Chris Cage** in a handicap match; **Flash** and **Trailer Park Trash** beat **Bull Buchanan** and **Big Bad John**; **Nidia** (from *Tough Enough*), **Redd Dogg**, and **Shelton Benjamin** defeated **Synn** and **The Disciples of Synn** when Nidia pinned Synn; and in the main event, Ric Flair teamed with son **David** to defeat **Sean O'Haire** and OVW champion **Prototype**. Prototype was absolutely livid following the match.

"Ric Flair hit me with a low blow! That's the only way he was able to beat me," the self-proclaimed "Perfect Man" fumed. "What does it say when

the so-called greatest wrestler of all-time has to resort to a bush-league move like that to win a match? I guess I gave Flair too much credit. Next time we meet, it will be in the WWF, and we'll see who gets the last laugh then!"

In another OVW shocker, manager **Kenny Bolin** claims **Bolin Services** has formed an alliance with **Mark Cuban**, the outspoken owner of the Dallas Mavericks. Bolin and Prototype were shown meet-

ing with Cuban during a recent TV broadcast, and Bolin has claimed that the billionaire is providing the funding for a hostile takeover of OVW. Further details were unavailable at press time.

Things don't look good for the XWF. The upstart promotion recently canceled a series of house shows due to problems with a local promoter and poor ticket sales, and several XWF wrestlers are openly questioning how much longer the company will be around.

Randy Orton finally debuted on WWF TV with a convincing win over **Hardcore Holly**. Keep an eye out for Randy's wheelbarrow German suplex into a Boston crab finisher; it's one of the most stunning maneuvers I've seen in years.

Former ECW valet **Dawn Marie** has signed a deal with the WWF. She has wrestled another recent signee, **Kim Neilson**, at several house shows and has competed in dark matches at TV tapings, but it hasn't yet been decided

whether she will be assigned to OVW or the HWA before debuting on WWF TV. After a recent *Jakked* loss to **Sho Funaki**, **Lance Storm** could certainly use his former sidekick's help.

Lita underwent neck surgery by **Dr. Lloyd Youngblood** after suffering cracked vertebrae while filming an episode of the Fox TV series *Dark Angel*. She is expected to be out of action for six to nine months. Dr. Youngblood also treated Austin and Chris Benoit for similar injuries.

On the subject of Benoit, "The Canadian Crippler" recently showed up at the Danny Davis Arena in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and got into an altercation with Basham and Damaja on an OVW card. Benoit should be back in action in the WWF by the time you read this.

That's what's happening. Catch ya again next issue. □



Dawn Marie is now under contract to the WWF, though it remains to be seen if she will be assigned to a developmental territory before she begins appearing on WWF TV. Perhaps she could help jumpstart the career of former ECW cohort Lance Storm.

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FALL/80 Rhodes, Rich, Sammartino, Mascaras, Grahams.

FALL/81 Section: Tomorrow's Superstars; Sammartino, Steamboat, Freebirds.

FALL/82 Section: Sexiest Superstar; Albano's teams, Hernandez, Mascaras-Sheik.

SUMMER/83 Section: Bob Backlund; Lawler, Gagne, Sheik, Mascaras, then and now.

FALL/83 Section: WCW Stars; Steve O, Studd, Bruiser.

SPRING/84 Section: Secret Fears; Color Action Gallery: Tommy Rich.

WINTER/84 Section: Sexiest Superstar; Color Action Gallery: Billy Jack Haynes.

SPRING/85 Section: 10 Most Hated Men; Color Action Gallery: Roddy Piper.

SPRING/88 Section: Don't Trust These Men! Dream Match: Sammartino vs. Hogan; Color Action Gallery: Randy Savage.

WINTER/88 Section: Sexiest Superstar; Dream Match: Flair vs. Savage; Color Action Gallery: Rick Rude.

FALL/89 Section: 10 Men Who Will Rule Wrestling In The '90s; Dream Match: Hogan & Steamboat vs. Savage & Flair; Color Action Gallery: The Ultimate Warrior.

WINTER/89 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; Dream Match: Elizabeth vs. Sherri; Color Action Gallery: Blanchard & Anderson.

SUMMER/90 Section: Greatest Finishing Maneuvers; Dream Match: Hogan vs. Luger; Color Action Gallery: Hulk Hogan.

AUG/90 Section: Don't Trust These Men! Dream Match: Ultimate Warrior vs. Flair; Color Action Gallery: Norman.

OCT/90 Section: 50 Strongest Men; Dream Match: Tag Team Extravaganza; Color Action Gallery: Steve "Dr. Death" Williams.

DEC/90 Section: Sexiest Superstars; Dream Match: Hennig-Rude; Color Action Gallery: Missy Hyatt.

FEB/91 Section: Wrestling's Next Champions; Dream Match: Sting vs. Luger; Color Action Gallery: Legion of Doom.

APRIL/91 Section: Teams We'd Like To See; Dream Match: Hogan vs. Ultimate Warrior; Color Action Gallery: Sid Vicious.

JUNE/91 Section: Wrestling's Best; Dream

Match: Strongest Man Competition; Color Action Gallery: Ric Flair

AUG/91 Section: Top 20 Stars; Dream Match: LOD vs. Steiners; Color Action Gallery: Curt Hennig.

OCT/91 Section: These Men Must Be Banned! Dream Match: Andre-Gigante; Color Action Gallery: The Undertaker.

DEC/91 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; Dream Match: Battle Royal of Champions; Color Action Gallery: Steiners.

FEB/92 Section: Wrestlers To Make '92 Sizzle; Dream Match: Bret Hart vs. Sting; Color Action Gallery: Cactus Jack.

APRIL/92 Section: Little-Known Facts; Dream Match: Hogan vs. Justice; Color Action Gallery: Johnny B. Badd.

JUNE/92 Section: Dangerous Matches; Dream Match: Ultimate Dream Supercard; Color Action Gallery: Dangerous Matches.

AUG/92 Section: Greatest WrestleMania Matches; Dream Match: Kamala vs. Abdullah; Steiners, Sting-Cactus.

SEPT/92 Section: Most Complete Wrestlers; Dream Match: IRS vs. Windham; Shango, Owen, Steamboat vs. Rude.

OCT/92 Section: Overrated/Underrated; Dream Match: Michaels vs. Jannetty; Money Inc., Olympic wrestlers.

DEC/92 Section: 21st Century Stars; Dream Match: R. Steiner & Williams vs. S. Steiner & Gordy; Money Inc., Jarrett.

JAN/93 Section: Great Arenas; Dream Match: Halloween Horrors Battle Royal; Steamboat-Austin, Undertaker-Flair, Pillman.

MARCH/93 Section: Hot '93 Wrestlers; Dream Match: Hart vs. Simmons; Steamboat-Pillman, Tyson to wrestle.

APRIL/93 Section: Tag Team We'd Like To See; Dream Match: Dusty & Dustin vs. Bill & Erik Watts; Badd, Vader.

JUNE/93 Section: Wrestling's Best; Dream Match: Vader vs. Yokozuna; Missy & Flair, Windham, Cactus & Orndorff.

AUG/93 Section: Top 20 Stars; Dream Match: Rude vs. Madusa; Duggan, Gilbert, Watts, Wippleman.

OCT/93 Section: Ban These Men; Dream Match: Hogan & Beefcake vs. Sting & Davey Boy; Miss Texas, Michaels-Doink, Dusty & Dustin, R&Rs.

DEC/93 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; Dream Match: Lex Luger's challenge; Michaels, Hawk, Adams, Eaton & Benoit.

SPRING/94 Section: 10 Stars To Make '94 Sizzle; Dream Match: Cactus vs. Doink; Sting, Steiners, Sabu.

SUMMER/94 Section: 10 Stars Who Are An Embarrassment; Dream Match: Bret vs. Sting; Hogan, Dustin, Vader & Race.

FALL/94 Section: 10 Fan Favorites You Should Be Ashamed To Cheer; Dream Match: Vader & Bigelow vs. Yokozuna & Earthquake.

WINTER/94 Section: Turnbuckle Turkey Awards! Dream Match: Hogan vs. Hart vs. Vader; Lawler, Flair, Douglas.

SPRING/95 Section: Personal Questions; Dream Match: All-time NWA title tourney; Simmons, Hogan, Cornette, Backlund.

SUMMER/95 Section: Top 20 Stars; Dream Match: All-time WWF title tourney; DiBiase, Steiners, Inoki-Sting.

FALL/95 Section: Top 20 tag teams; Dream Match: Hogan vs. Flair; LT, Sid, Sandman, Lawler, Hogan.

WINTER/95 Section: Superstars Of Tomorrow; Dream Match: Undertaker vs. Vader; Diesel-Ramon, Jarrett, Wright, Michaels.

SPRING/96 Section: Report cards; Dream Match: Wrestling's Dream World; Diesel, Gibson, Luger-Hogan, Ramon-Kid, Mexicans.

SPRING/97 Section: Top 20 Stars; Dream Match: Hall & Nash vs. New Diesel & New Razor; Hogan-Piper, Jarrett, Yoko, Ahmed.

SUMMER/97 Section: Top 20 Tag Teams; Dream Match: Piper vs. Austin; NWO, NOD, Michaels, Liger.

FALL/97 Section: 20 Tag Teams We'd Love To See; Dream Match: Hogan & Savage vs. Hall & Nash; Hogan & Rodman, Bret-Vince, Taz-Sabu, The Giant.

WINTER/97 Section: The Best In 10 Crucial Categories; Dream Match: Rhodes vs. Rhodes; Undertaker, Luger & Sting, Dillon & Raven.

APRIL/98 Section: The Most Outrageous Wrestling Stories Of All-Time; Dream Match: Cactus vs. Mankind vs. Dude; Richards, Austin, Brawler, Flanagan-Wolfie.

JUNE/98 Section: Superstars Of Today Pick Superstars Of Tomorrow; Dream Match: Mike Tyson vs. Hulk Hogan; Shamrock-Owen, Savage-Steiner, Jimmy Hart, Bobo.

AUG/98 Section: Ranking The Sport's 50 Strongest Men; Dream Match: WWF vs.

WCW vs. ECW; McMahon, S. Steiner, Faarooq, Hall & Nash, Dudley.

OCT/98 Section: Wrestling's Dangerous Dozen; Dream Match: Michaels vs. Helmsley; Dustin, Hogan-Warrior, Ray-Booker, NWA at 50.

DEC/98 Section: Guide To Independents; Dream Match: Jericho vs. Maivia; McMahon-Austin; New Jack, DX, Juv.

FEB/99 Section: Superstars' Report Cards; Dream Match: Sting vs. Warrior; Flair-Bischoff, Dusty-Hall, New Age Outlaws, McMahon-Bearer-Austin, Pirata-Vampiro.

APRIL/99 Section: 1998 In Review; Dream Match: Ventura vs. Hogan; Sable, Flair, Michaels-McMahon, Wrestling Museum.

JUNE/99 Section: Top 20 Stars; Dream Match: Ross & Mankind vs. Schiavone & Goldberg; Debra-Jarrett-Owen, Goldberg, Chyna, Dream-Funk, David Flair.

AUG/99 Section: 10 Stars Who Are Ruining The Sport; Dream Match: Vince vs. Bret; Konnan, X-Pac, Mankind, Flair.

OCT/99 Section: Top 20 Hardcore Heroes; Dream Match: Shamrock vs. S. Steiner; Owen, McMahons-Undertaker, Taz-Van Dam, Pillman '99.

DEC/99 Section: Guide To Independents; Dream Match: Nash vs. Kane; Goldberg, ECW, Jarrett & Debra.

FEB/00 Section: Superstars' Report Cards; Dream Match: McMahons vs. Flairs; Edge & Christian, D-Lo, Hall & Nash, Guido.

APRIL/00 Section: 1999 In Review; Dream Match: Ultimate Cat Fight; Sting, Vader, Runnels, Baldies.

JUNE/00 Section: The Top 25 Wrestlers Of The '90s; Dream Match: Mankind-Rock vs. DDP-Goldberg; Hardys, Rock, Madusa, Goldberg.

AUG/00 Section: Best Match Ever; Dream Match: Jarrett vs. Jericho; Kane, Edge & Christian, Young, Cyrus, Wall, Kelly.

OCT/00 Section: Dream Roster; Dream Match: Dream Roster Challenge; DDP, Crash, Goldberg, Dreamer.

DEC/00 Section: 2000 Wrestling Guide; Dream Match: Survivor Smackdown; Rock, Booker, Malenko, Awesome, Van Dam.

APR/01 Section: Report Cards; Dream Match: Team WWF vs. Team World; Angle, S. Steiner, Miss Holly, Nash.

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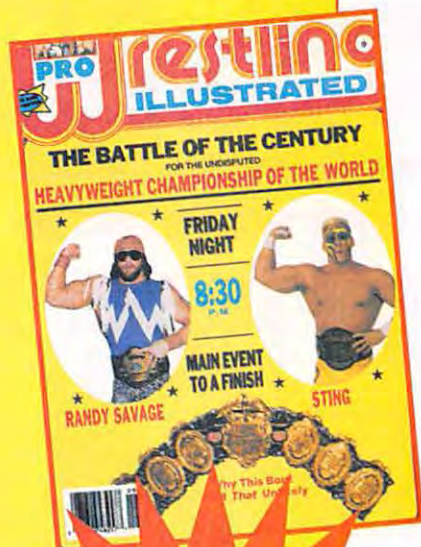
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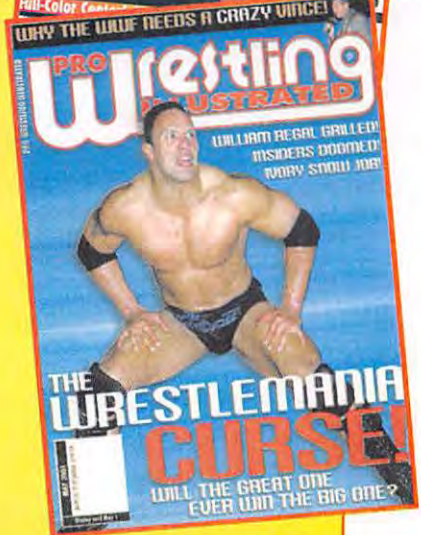
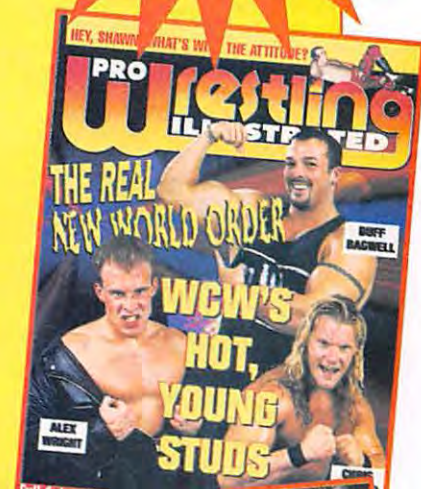
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October 1990: Sting's Painful Lesson: You'll Have No Friends At The Top. Centerfold: Brutus Beefcake. Plus: Orndorff-Blanchard, Tugboat, Teddy Long, Ultimate Warrior, Road Warriors.

February 1991: WrestleMania VII Contest. Centerfold: 1991 calendar. Plus: Sid Vicious, DiBiase-Rhodes, Scott Steiner, Power & Glory, Terry Funk.

April 1991: Sgt. Slaughter Guilty Of Treason! Centerfold: Tom Zenk. Plus: Sting, Magnum T.A., Jesse Ventura, Lawler-Gilbert, Hogan & Warrior.

June 1991: Hulk Hogan: America's Hero. Centerfold: Hacksaw Duggan. Plus: Cactus Jack, Ric Flair, Nasty Boys, Steiners, Simmons-Reed.

July 1991: The War Is Over! Hulk Hogan Liberates The WWF Belt From Sgt. Slaughter! Centerfold: Brian Pillman. Plus: Horsemen, Lex Luger, Eric Embry, Demolition.

August 1991 (Special Issue): Supercards '91. Centerfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: WrestleMania VII, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior, Owen Hart, Koloff-Luger.

October 1991: Sid Justice: The Second Coming Of Hulk Hogan. Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plus: Hogan-Slaughter, Terrence Taylor, Barry Windham, Williams-Bigelow.

November 1991: Your Wedding Gift For Savage & Elizabeth: Help Lift The "Macho Man's" Suspension! Centerfold: Bobby Eaton. Plus: Tito Santana, Bushwhackers, Jushin Liger, Brian Pillman.

February 1992: Has Hulk Hogan Had Enough? Centerfold: 1992 calendar. Plus: Sting, Justice-Roberts, hot prospects, Eddie Gilbert.

May 1992: Revitalized In Tokyo: Hulk Hogan Is Super-Psychod For WrestleMania VIII! Centerfold: Rick Rude. Plus: Sting & Muta-Steiners, Jarrett & Fuller, Lightning Kid, Randy Savage, intimidation.

June 1992: Exclusive PWI Interview: Roddy Piper Speaks Out! Centerfold: Dustin Rhodes. Plus: Dangerously-Sting, Abdullah-Cactus, Sid Justice, Randy Savage.

July 1992: The Best Of The Best—The Masters Of Their Craft. Centerfold: Randy Savage. Plus: Liger-Pillman, Jim Neidhart, U.S.-Japan, Ric Flair.

September 1992: Savage vs. Sting: Why It Isn't That Unlikely. Centerfold: Nikita Koloff. Plus: Steiners, Barry Windham, Sid Justice, Hodge & Weston, Shawn Michaels.

October 1992: The Hatred Still Runs Deep: Ultimate Warrior vs. Randy Savage—They'll Settle Up At SummerSlam! Centerfold: Cactus Jack. Plus: Steve Williams, Tom Zenk, WWF title controversy, fire match, Eric Embry.

November 1992: The British Bulldog: Hounding The Hitman. Centerfold: Ultimate Warrior. Plus: Honky Tonk Man, Steiners, Undertaker, Madusa, perfect wrestler.

February 1993: No One Can Cut Down Razor Ramon. Centerfold: Curt Hennig. Plus: Jake Roberts, Pillman-Dustin, Ric Flair-Road Warriors, Rick Rude, Snuka-Muraco.

May 1993: WrestleMania Without Hulk Hogan? Centerfold: The Undertaker. Plus: Ron Simmons, Cactus Jack, Madusa-Sherri, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior.

April 1996: WCW World Title Turmoil. Centerfold: The Kid. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Ahmed Johnson, Bob Armstrong, Michaels-Bret, Public Enemy.

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August 1996: Shawn Michaels: Finally—A World Champion. Centerfold: Sunny. Plus: 1-2-3 Kid, Sting-Flair, Sandman-Missy, Steve Austin, Jimmy Hart, WrestleMania XII.

October 1996: Peaking Too Soon: Will The Giant Be Ruined By His Own Success? Centerfold: Goldust. Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Bulldog, Lex Luger.

Winter 1996 (Special Issue): PWI 500. Centerfold: Shawn Michaels.

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May 1997: March Madness—Bret vs. Shawn. Centerfold: Chris Benoit & Woman. Plus: Goldust, Giant, Akira Hokuto, Roddy Piper.

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NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 10)

think it will), look for The Rock to take further strides in Hollywood very quickly. He's already saying that he can picture a time when he'll only wrestle a handful of matches for the WWF per year ... Triple-H hasn't captured my attention as the undisputed WWF World champion like he did in 2000, the last year in which he held the WWF title. Triple-H's character is a heel at heart, and watching him wrestle honorably just doesn't do it for me. Steph's absence might also be affecting his performance.

Tough Enough 2 didn't draw the ratings that the original series did, but it was still a hit. The difference between this year and last year? Last year, the contestants seemed to be chosen for their personalities more than their in-ring potential. That made for more compelling television, especially since *Tough Enough* spends more time on developing the trainees' personalities than anything else. (How do you like that? A whole paragraph on one subject!)

I'll be curious to see how the WWF wrestlers touring with this year's Ozzfest extravaganza are presented. The highlights of Edge in full wrestling gear rubber-necking on stage with Rob Zombie still gives me goosebumps ... I truly hope Chris Jericho isn't pushed back down to the mid-card level. It wasn't his fault that his run as undisputed WWF World cham-



It's been more than a year since ECW folded ... and C.W. Anderson was forced to return to the independent circuit. Apparently the WWF doesn't have much interest in signing him. Welsh argues that he is still worth a look. Anderson and former WCW star Disco Inferno, too.

pion was overshadowed by the New World Order and the feud between Triple-H and Steph. No one on the WWF roster could have successfully competed with those storylines ... Mark Henry as a top 20 pick? (Yes, three paragraphs later and I'm still flabbergasted by that one) ... Anyone else see Paul Heyman's acquisition of Brock Lesnar as the beginnings of yet another Dangerous Alliance? Let's hope so ... Whom did Jerry Lynn tick off in the WWF to find himself back on the independent circuit? He'd be a perfect fit for the *Smack-*

down cruiserweight division.

Am I the only one who wants to start calling *Raw* and *Smackdown* promotions? I know they don't exactly fit the criteria, since they both fall under the auspices of the WWF and share a World champion, but I'm already tired of saying the "Raw brand" and the "Smackdown brand." It's too politically correct ... When will the major Japanese promotions stop trying to make unification matches happen? What's the point in being your own promotion if you're always trying to do business with other guys? I just don't get it ... I don't get Japan's one-year contracts, either. It seems like we're always reporting that some major name has jumped ship over there ... Raven as the co-host of *Heat* is extremely exciting. Despite his post-punk look, Raven's one of

the most intelligent people in the business, and that's reflected in his extraordinarily quick wit.

I'd like to recommend three names to Jim Ross, head of WWF talent relations: C.W. Anderson, C.W. Anderson, and C.W. Anderson ... I'd also like to see the WWF sign Disco Inferno. Really ... Can someone please tell Albert to please put a shirt on? Speedo-style tights just aren't made for men that large and hairy. He's the WWF's version of Ron Jeremy ... Speaking of large and hairy, all hail indy superstar Mr. Ooh La La!

BLINDSIDED

(Continued from page 12)

The image wasn't as clear as before, but it would suffice.

Suddenly, Sgt. Slaughter hauled off and punched Wahoo in his ample stomach. Slaughter continued to brutalize Wahoo and snatched the headress off his head. He ripped the headress to shreds. Feathers flew everywhere.

I couldn't believe my eyes. Wahoo seemed so calm, like such a nice man. Why would that mean bully, Sgt. Slaughter, want to treat him that way? Moments later, Caudle smiled at the camera and said, "It's been a wild ride, fans! We'll see you next week, and until then, so long for now!"

"What, what?" I asked in disbelief. "What about that nice Indian? Is he okay?"

I went to bed despising that Sgt. Slaughter. And he was U.S. champion! Didn't Ronald Reagan have anything to say about this?

I stopped going to Billy's house on Saturday evenings. Instead, I sat in my upstairs bedroom, where I could get better reception. And UHF channel 41 was easier to watch on a 13-inch black and white.

A few weeks later, I was thrilled when Wahoo McDaniel beat Sgt. Slaughter for the U.S. title. Bob Caudle said it happened in Charlotte, North Carolina. He showed footage of the dark arena packed with people, where McDaniel and Slaughter were trading fists. Boy, they looked tired. They were sweating and could barely stand. But Wahoo finally pinned the evil Slaughter.

That night, I went to bed respecting Wahoo McDaniel.

I remained a Wahoo fan through the rest of his career. I cheered when he became the first wrestler to trust Roddy Piper, who was begging to be accepted by Mid-Atlantic fan favorites. "If you turn on me, Piper, I'm gonna take it out of your hide, if your hide's worth that much," warned Wahoo.

I kept track of Wahoo through the magazines when he moved on to the AWA and challenged Nick Bockwinkel for the World title. I stayed loyal to Wahoo even when he turned against Rick Steamboat and took back the U.S. title. I supported him when he feuded with the younger, more popular Magnum T.A. I felt bad for Wahoo when, as National champion, he lost a title unification match to U.S. champion Nikita Koloff. Years later, when I was home from college on the weekends, I couldn't believe I was still tuning in to channel 41 at 3 a.m. to watch Wahoo on South Atlantic Pro Wrestling.

There was always something about Wahoo. He had the same personality, whether as a fan favorite or heel. He was deadly serious at all times, sometimes warning his opponents they might not actually survive their matches.

It reminds me of Gordon Solie's comment only four days before his death in 2000. "Other announcers at the time treated wrestling like a comedy act," he said. "When I



Wahoo vs. Sgt. Slaughter! Those who remember this early-1980s feud in the Mid-Atlantic area remember it as a classic, a series of intense, bloody wars. Wahoo vs. the Sarge did a lot to get Burkett hooked on professional wrestling some 20 years ago.

got the job, I went to [Florida promoter] Cowboy Luttrell and asked him how he wanted me to handle it. He looked me in the eye and said, 'It's your paycheck. Treat it very seriously.' That's what I did ever since."

I don't know if Wahoo got the same advice from Cowboy Luttrell, but someone must have given it to him. Wahoo treated wrestling very seriously, and that was part of his appeal. I think fans appreciated that sincerity. Also, he treated his Chickasaw heritage very seriously. Unlike Chief Jay Strongbow, he didn't stoop to outlandish war dances or making stereotypical whooping noises.

Unfortunately, I witnessed only the final few chapters of McDaniel's career. I wish I had seen his feuds with Johnny Valentine, the Anderson brothers, Harley Race, and Ric Flair.

I don't know if that would have made me any sadder when I heard about his death on April 18 in Houston. McDaniel lost both of his kidneys more than four years ago, and renal problems and diabetes had plagued him for some time. The former football star was 63.

The night I learned of his death, I paused before shutting off the light. I thought about how I was going to miss Wahoo McDaniel.

(Harry Burkett can be reached via e-mail at HBurkettJr@excite.com.) □

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 April 1986: Starrcade's Over, But The Feud Rages On: Dusty Rhodes And Ric Flair Cannot Survive '86! Also: Andre-Heenan, Bill Watts, Scott Hall, Lance Von Erich.
 June 1986: Barry Windham's NWA Mission: Humiliate Ric Flair! Also: Nord-Road Warriors, British Bulldogs, Lance Von Erich-One Man Gang, Tully Blanchard.
 July 1986: All-American Special Issue: Sgt. Slaughter, Hulk Hogan, Magnum T.A. Also: Ivan Koloff, Rude-Lance Von Erich.
 Aug. 1986: WrestleMania 2: Hulk Hogan's Night Of Redemption. Also: Jim & Ron Garvin, Steve Williams, Rick Martel, Sir Oliver Humperdink.
 Sept. 1986: Dusty Rhodes & Magnum T.A.: America's Team Is Not Out For Glory ... It's Out For Revenge! Also: Andre-Hogan, Chris Adams, Barry Windham, Scott Hall.
 Oct. 1986: The NWA Championship Sinks To A New Low: Ric Flair Needs 10 Thugs To Defeat Lex Luger! Also: Road Warriors, Randy Savage, Verne Gagne, Fantastics-Sheepherders.
 Nov. 1986: Paul Ellering's Own Story: "How My Road Warriors Made Dusty Rhodes NWA Champion." Also: Adams-Rude, British Bulldogs, Bockwinkel-Hansen, Bill Watts.
 Dec. 1986: Rock 'n' Roll Revival: Morton And Gibson Regain The NWA World Tag Title! Also: Lex Luger, Hogan-Adonis, Hall-DeBeers, Baby Doll.
 Jan. 1987: The New Roddy Piper: Why The Fans Love Him ... But Why They Should Hate Him! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Rude-Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow.
 Feb. 1987: Hogan, Piper, Orndorff: The WWF's Hate Triangle. Also: Terry Taylor, Ric Flair, Midnight Rockers, Kevin Von Erich.
 March 1987: Happy Anniversary, Hulk Hogan! The WWF Champion Celebrates Three Years At The Top. Also: Ric Flair, Missy-Gilbert, Lex Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.
 April 1987: Steamboat & Windham: Manny Happy Returns! Also: Paul Ellering, Hacksaw Duggan, prospects.
 May 1987: Barry Windham's Warning To Lex Luger: "Keep Away From The Four Horsemen." Also: Steamboat-Savage, Hogan-Andre, Freebirds & Sunshine, Williams-OMG, Midnight Rockers.

June 1987: Nikita Koloff's Mission: Saddle The Horsemen And Trample Lex Luger! Also: Roddy Piper, Adams & Taylor, Bruiser Brody, Scott Hall.
 July 1987: Exclusive Ringside Reports: WrestleMania III Makes History! Also: Midnight Rockers, Mike Rotundo, Danny Davis, Ted DiBiase.
 Aug. 1987: The Superpowers' Super Victory: Dusty Rhodes & Nikita Koloff Win The Crockett Cup. Also: Hulk Hogan, Lane & Cornette, Mike Von Erich, Adams & Taylor.
 Sept. 1987: Hulk Hogan Defeats Harley Race: How Fate Took The Greatness Out Of This Violent Feud. Also: New Breed-R&R Express, Rich & Idol, Honky Tonk Man, Eddie Gilbert.
 Oct. 1987: The Rock 'n' Roll Express Win Their Fourth NWA Title: Also: Hogan-Bigelow, Rhodes-Blanchard, scaffold, Kevin Sullivan.
 Nov. 1987: Special Fan Poll: Should Mr. T Be Allowed To Referee? Also: War Games, Bulldogs, Condrey & Rose, Dusty Rhodes.
 Dec. 1987: Rhodes Challenges Luger: Will Dusty's U.S. Title Hopes Split The Superpowers? Also: Hayes-Bubba, Magnum T.A., Randy Savage, Al Perez.
 Jan. 1988: Is Hulk Hogan Bored With The WWF Title? Also: R&Rs-Horsemen, Flair-R Garvin, Adrian Adonis, Steve Williams.
 Feb. 1988: A Special Analysis By Jesse Ventura: Randy Savage Has Wimped Out! Also: Sting, R&Rs-Blanchard & Anderson, Kevin Von Erich, Dangerously-Lawler-Dundee.
 March 1988: Bam Bam Bigelow: Wrestling's Most Dangerous Man. Also: Adams-Perez, Nikita Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.
 May 1988: Million-Dollar Middleman: The Future Of The WWF Is In Ted DiBiase's Hands. Also: Zbyszko & Baby Doll, Road Warriors-Konga & Warlord, Fritz Von Erich, Rockers-Express.
 June 1988: The Noble Savage: How Beauty Killed The Beast Within "The Macho Man." Also: Warriors-Warlord & Barbarian, R&R Express, Baby Doll, G. Gagne-Hennig.
 Aug. 1988: What Randy Savage Must Do To Escape The Shadow Of Hulk Hogan. Also: Hyatt-Gilbert, Sting, Michael Hayes, Honky Tonk.
 Oct. 1988: Preview & Analysis: Megapowers vs. Megabucks. Also: Horsemen, Jerry Lawler, Warlord & Barbarian, Dangerously-Gilbert, Beefcake-Honky Tonk.
 Nov. 1988: Dusty Rhodes vs. Barry Windham: The Night The Teacher Learned A Lesson. Also: Kerry-Lawler, Lex Luger, Muraco-Valentine, Freebirds.
 Dec. 1988: Exclusive "Hotseat" Interview: Roddy Piper—Will He Ever Be Back? Also: Powers of Pain, Ultimate Warrior, Ric Flair, Bambi-Mystic, Kevin Von Erich.
 Feb. 1989: Tully & Arn Will Fail Under Bobby Heenan! A Special Analysis By J.J. Dillon. Also: Hogan-Bossman, Sgt. Slaughter, Lawler-Inside Wrestling, Davis-Wayne.
 June 1989: Finally, Fortune Favors The Challenger: Rick Steamboat Wins Ric Flair's NWA Belt! Also: Morton & Gibson, Macho Madness-Hulkamania, Lex Luger, Jimmy Jack Funk.
 July 1989: Megapowers II? It's Time For Ultimate Warrior And Sting To Reunite! Also: Kerry Von Erich, Savage & Hart, Barry Windham, Demolition-Powers of Pain, ex-NWA stars.
 Aug. 1989: Your Ballots Are In: Hulkamania Rules! Also: Tanaka & Diamond, Rick Steamboat, Bigelow-Rhodes, Rick Rude, Jim Cornette.
 Sept. 1989: Savage Is Shamed By Hogan—Only Elizabeth Can Save Him Now. Also: Lex Luger, Mil Mascaras, Dusty Rhodes, Bushwhackers, Skandor Akbar.
 Oct. 1989: Dusty Rhodes' WWF Hit List. Also: Hall-Pillman-Vicious, Curt Hennig, Warriors, Terry Gordy, Kevin Von Erich.
 Nov. 1989: Please, Elizabeth—Don't Wrestle Sherrill! Also: Mil Mascaras, Dangerously-Cornette, Sting-T, Funk, Lex Luger, Jake Roberts.
 Dec. 1989: The Dusty Road Is Paved With Gold: The American Dream Lives On! Also: Ric Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry-Chu-hi, Lex Luger, Larry Zbyszko.
 Jan. 1990 Why Sting's Friendship Is Tearing Ric Flair Apart. Also: Morton & Gibson, Hulk Hogan, Sting-Flair, Roberts-

DiBiase, Lawler-Embry.
 Feb. 1990: Sex Symbol Showdown: Rude's Out ... Piper's In ... And The Fans Love It! Also: Warriors-Skyscrapers, Jimmy Snuka, Tom Zenk, Destruction Crew, Kerry Von Erich.
 March 1990 (Special Issue): The '80s: A Rousing Review Of A Dynamic Decade. Also: Bobby Heenan, Ric Flair, Paul Orndorff.
 April 1990: Starrcade '89: Night Of The Iron Men. Also: Warrior-Hogan, Dustin Rhodes, Buzz Sawyer, WWF shuffle.
 May 1990: WrestleMania VI Main Event: Hulk Hogan vs. Ultimate Warrior: Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: Jerry Lawler, Al Perez, Lex Luger, Woman, LPWA.
 June 1990: Tragedy Strikes Sting! How You Can Help Speed His Recovery. Also: Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate Warrior, Jeff Jarrett.
 July 1990: Our Urgent Plea To Hulk Hogan & Ultimate Warrior: Team Up And Eliminate These Men. Also: Steiners, Sting, Earthquake, Kokina Maximus, Tessa.
 Aug. 1990: The Experts Agree: Lex Luger Has Made Ric Flair A Broken Man. Also: Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior, Pillman & Zenk, Terry Taylor, Jerry Lawler.
 Sept. 1990: Fighting Fire With Fire: The Awesome Foursome—Committed To Destroying The Horsemen. Also: Hulk Hogan, Hacksaw Duggan, JYD, Adams-Jeannie, Midnight Express.
 Oct. 1990: Sting: "I Feel Like I've Conquered The World!" Also: Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, El Gigante, Mike Rotundo, Juice Patrol.
 Nov. 1990: Ric Flair & Hulk Hogan: A Tale Of Two Ex-Champions. Also: Sid Vicious, Sgt. Slaughter, Jeannie-Toni, Mr. Fuji & Orient Express.
 Dec. 1990: Halloween Havoc Horror! Why Sting Is Spooked By Sid Vicious. Also: Hulk Hogan, Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Larry Zbyszko.
 Jan. 1991: Warning To The Ultimate Warrior: The Legion Of Doom Will Lead You To Destruction. Also: Paul E. Dangerously, Chris Adams, Steiners, Lawler-T, Funk.
 Feb. 1991: Our Plan For The "Hulkster" To Regain The WWF World Belt. Also: Terry Taylor, Rick Martel, Sting & Simmons, all-anoying, Stan Hansen.
 March 1991: The Earthquake Feud Rumbles On: Will Hulk Hogan Be The Victim Of His Own Deadly Obsession? Also: Roberts-Martel, Sting-Hansen, Keirn-Perez, Barry Windham.
 April 1991: The Steiners: They're Be Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team, But ... Also: Eddie Gilbert, Flair-Sting, Steiners, Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Sgt. Slaughter.
 May 1991: Savage vs. Warrior: The Bloodlust Of Ex-Champions. Also: Steiners, Sting, Virgil, D. Sammartino-I, Koloff.
 June 1991: Steiners, LOD: Tag Team Thunder. Also: Steve Williams, Nikita Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees, Arn Anderson.
 July 1991: Hogan's Burning Mad! Beating Slaughter For The Title Was Not Enough. Also: Virgil, Nastys, Steiners, Dan Spivey, Terry Funk.
 Aug. 1991: Are The Steiners Getting Too Cocky For Their Own Good? Also: Jerry Lawler, Rick Steamboat, Warrior-Undertaker, Dustin Rhodes, Flair-Windham.
 Sept. 1991: Justice Is In The WWF ... And Hogan's In The Biggest Trouble Of His Life! Also: Missy-Paul E., Rick Rude, Curt Hennig, Stevie Ray, Diamond Exchange.
 Oct. 1991: Exclusive Preview & Analysis: SummerSlam '91. Also: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Leg Luger, Santana-Atlas, Steve Williams, Studd-Zenk.
 Nov. 1991: Our Investigation Reveals ... The Truth Behind The Hogan-Savage Connection. Also: Lex Luger, Ric Flair, War Games, Mounties, foreign objects.
 Dec. 1991: A Night To Remember: SummerSlam Provides Heat For The Cold Months Ahead. Also: Alexandra York, Simmons-Luger, Lane & Cornette, Leatherface.
 Jan. 1992: Inside Wrestling Reveals: Sting's Memo From A Maniac! Also: Freebirds, Blackhearts, Bret Hart, Dusty Rhodes, Mike Rotundo.
 Feb. 1992: A Reign Of Pain: Lex Luger—The Agony Of A World Champion. Also: Bret Hart, Patriot, Rick Rude, Enforcers, Thesz & Rogers.

March 1992: Who's Winning The Hogan-Flair Wars? Also: Steiners, Survivor Series, Enforcers-Rhodes & Steamboat, Johnny B. Badd.

May 1992: War! WrestleMania Will Be Sid And Hulk's Battleground. Also: Justin Liger, Eddie Gilbert, Repo Man, Austin-Blossom, Tri-State & UWf.

June 1992: Sting: A New Champion, A New Era. Also: Hulk Hogan, Harley Race, Marcus Bagwell, Tony Atlas, IRS & DiBiase.

July 1992: Is Reigning The WWF Title An Impossible Undertaking? Also: Sherri & Shawn, Big Van Vader, Gordy & Williams, Kamala, Joe Savoldi.

Aug. 1992: The Closer Flair Gets ... The More Savage "Macho Man" Becomes. Also: Jack-Badd, Brian Christopher, LOD & Ellering, Taylor & Valentine, Dusty Wolfe.

Sept. 1992: Hulk Hogan's "Retirement": Why The WWF Will Never Let Him Rest In Peace. Also: War Games, Big Van Vader, Kamala, Marty Jannetty, U.K.

Oct. 1992: SummerSlam '92: Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: S. Steiner-Muta, Ron Simmons, Eddie Gilbert, Eric Embry.

Nov. 1992: The Great American Crash: Vader Crushes Sting For The WCW World Title. Also: Ric Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Madusa, Warlord & Barbarian-Bushwhackers, top rope rule.

Dec. 1992: Hey, Ric Flair: Stop Whining And Start Winning. Also: Razor Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jeff Jarrett, Windham & D. Rhodes, NWA title.

Jan. 1993 (Special Edition): 80,355 Fans Can't Be Wrong: This Was The Greatest SummerSlam Ever! Also: WWF-USWA, LOD, Sting-Simmons, Bret-Shango, Rude-Dustin.

March 1993: Who Controls The Balance Of Power In The WWF? Also: Shawn Michaels, Nikita Koloff, Windham-Dustin, Survivor Series, Rod Price.

April 1993: New Blood! The Wrestlers Who Could Revitalize The WWF In '93. Also: Z-Man & Gunn, Sting-Vader, Dangerous Alliance, Ric Flair.

May 1993: Exclusive WrestleMania IX Match Analysis. Also: Andre the Giant, Pillman & Austin, Great Muta, Headshrinkers-Steiners, 2 Cold Scorpio.

Feb. 1994: Our Holiday Wish List For 1994. Also: Hogan-Savage-Bret, Hacksaw Duggan, Doink, Hollywood Blonds, Steven Regal.

April 1994 (Special Issue): The Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Lex Luger, Starrcade, Yoko-Fuji, Ric Flair, Curt Hennig, Funk-Sabu.

May 1994: Lex Luger & Bret Hart: Their Greatest Triumphs, Their Gravest Tragedies. Also: Flair-Rude, Rick Morton, Heenan-Bockwinkel, Brian Christopher, Yoko-Booger.

June 1994: Wake Up, Rick Steamboat: Ric Flair Is Still "Slack" Ric! Also: Jimmy Snuka, Tony Anthony, IRS, Bruise Brothers, Alundra Blayze, Freebirds.

July 1994 (Special Issue): A Look Into Wrestling's Future: You Won't Believe What You'll See! Also: Ron Simmons, Sting, Earthquake-Booger, Bob Armstrong, Diesel.

Oct. 1994 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Doink, Vader-Race, Mabel, Dory Funk Jr., Owen-Bret, Hall of Fame.

March 1995: Predictions 1995. Also: Nasty's, Razor Ramon, Tasmaniac, Kid-Man O'War, Pillman & Hogan.

June 1995: The Beginning Of The End? Will Hulk Hogan Get Burned By Friendly Fire? Also: Steve Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy, Bret-Owen, Jeff Jarrett.

Aug. 1995: The Untold Truth: WrestleMania X—The Winners And Losers. Also: Johnny B. Badd, Bam Bam Bigelow, John Studd, Bubba-Sting.

Oct. 1995 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Randy Savage, Bret & Cactus, Sting, Diesel, Hawk.

Nov. 1995: One Defense In Four Months? Strip Hulk Hogan Of The Title—Now! Also: Alex Wright, Tatanka, King of Ring, Chris Benoit, Backlund-Clinton.

Dec. 1995: White With Fright, Green With Envy: Why The Undertaker Had To Bury Kama. Also: Vader-Hogan, Warrior-Rene-gade, Gangstas-PE, Waylon Mercy, Heavenly Bodies.

Jan. 1996: Our Holiday Wish List For 1996! Also: Scott Norton, Sid Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio, Barry Horowitz, Sabu.

Feb. 1996: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1996 Has In Store For Them! Also: Goldust, Sherri-Parker, Mikey Whipwreck, Smokin' Gunns.

March 1996: His Excellency! How Bret Masterminded Diesel's Execution. Also: Jeff Jarrett, Giant, Jim Cornette, Survivor Series, Eddie Guerrero.

June 1996: Luger Or Hogan? If Sting Makes The Wrong Choice, He's Through! Also: Road Warriors, Roddy Piper, Ahmed Johnson, Raven, Al Snow.

Aug. 1996: The Greening Of Wrestling: How Sting & Shawn Will Become \$50,000,000 Men! Also: Bodydonnas, Giant, Guerrero-Misterio, George Steele, Goldust & Marlena.

Oct. 1996 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Jake Roberts, Yokozuna, Giant-Konnar, Ahmed Johnson, Chris Jericho, strutters.

Nov. 1996: The Steiners: Feasting On A Buffet Of Violence. Also: Shawn Michaels, Sabu-Douglas, King of Ring, Eddie Guerrero, truck stop terror.

Dec. 1996: Three Women For Four Horsemen: The Hot Search For A Fourth Filly Has Begun! Also: Sunny & Gunns, Giant, Goldust, Cornette & Hart, Jerry Jarrett.

Holiday 1996 (Special Issue): The Tombstone: Wrestling's Deadliest Finisher. Also: 1997 calendar, "Psycho" Sid, Benoit-Misterio, Steiners-NWO, Pit Bull I, Justin Liger.

Feb. 1997: Trouble In Egoville: Is There An NWO Within The NWO? Also: Chris Candido, Bret-Shawn, Ric Flair, Joey Styles, Liger-Benoit.

June 1997: Ahmed Johnson Reveals: "I Almost Joined The Nation Of Domination." Also: Mankind, Lex Luger, NWO, Davey Boy Smith, Jerry Graham.

Oct. 1997 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: LOD-PG-13, Rob Van Dam, Flair & Horsemen, Ken Shamrock, McMichael-White, Madd & Mama Maxxine.

Nov. 1997: WWF War Zone: Interfederation Battles Rock The Sport! Also: Ahmed Johnson, Curt Hennig, Nueva World Order, Chris Candido, Dan Severn.

Dec. 1997: Losing Is Bull! Has Dennis Rodman Had It With Hulk Hogan? Also: Steve Austin, Jarrett & Debra, Harts, Funk-Francine, Chris Jericho.

Holiday 1997 (Special Issue): The Steiners'

Million-Dollar Gamble! Also: 1998 calendar, Alex Wright, The Patriot, Sgt. Slaughter, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards.

March 1998: Hart Transplant! The Truth Behind Bret's Defection To WCW. Also: Steve McMichael, Bam Bam Bigelow, Steve Austin, Disco Inferno.

April 1998 (Special Issue): The 1998 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Scott Hall, Marlena, Chris Benoit, Gunn & James, Sabu-Sandman.

May 1998: Is The WWF Screwing Another Hart? Also: Steve Austin, Dallas Page, Booker T, Larry Zbyszko, Al Snow.

June 1998: Exclusive! Steve Austin: The 10 Men Who Inspired His Toughness. Also: Dusty & Dustin, Perry Saturn, Mortis, Jeff Jarrett.

July 1998 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Jericho-Misterio Jr., Steve Austin, Sunny, Scott Steiner, Christopher-Michinoku.

Aug. 1998: WrestleMania XIV: The Real Winners And Losers. Also: Sunny, Curt Hennig, Dan Severn, Ultimo Dragon.

Sept. 1998: Power Surge! While The NWO Fiddles ... These Men Are Burning. Also: Sabu, Ultimo-Guerrero, DeGeneration X-Owen, Rocky Maivia, Mad Russian-Rambo.

Oct. 1998 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Steve Austin, Taka Michinoku, Al Snow, Hollywood Hogan, Roddy Piper, Misawa-Kiwada.

Nov. 1998: Austin vs. Goldberg: Who Would Win And Why. Also: Bret Hart, Dude Love, Junkyard Dog, Helmsley-Michaels, Ray-Booker.

Dec. 1998: DDP's Big Bang Theories: Cutting Loose On Life, Love, & The Ultimate Booz. Also: Sabu-Jackie, Mankind, Hogan-Horace, D-Lo, APW.

Holiday 1998 (Special Issue): Kane: Still Haunted By His Day Of Glory. Also: Eddie Guerrero, Stevie Ray, Val Venis, turnbuckle turkeys, bonus calendar.

Jan. 1999: Seasons Greetings With A Bang (DDP & Kimberly). Also: Severn-Shamrock, Konnan, Arn, Undertaker-Kane, Chris Jericho.

Feb. 1999: Wrestling's Top Stars: What's Ahead For '99! Also: Hogan & Hart, D-Lo, Ken Shamrock, Slaughter-Snow.

March 1999: Estrange Situation! Insider Reveals: "Shane Still Resents His Father!" Also: X-Pac, Hogan-Warrior, Jesse Ventura, Billy Kidman, Scott Norton.

April 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Bossman-McMahon, Steiner & Bischoff, Hollywood Hogan, Wrath, Blue Meanie.

May 1999: Team Corporate's WrestleMania Scare! Mankind's Title Victory Could Have Spoiled Everything! Also: New Age Outlaws, Eddie Guerrero, Triple-H, Bill Goldberg.

June 1999: Still In-Vince-ible! What Will It Take To Topple This Man? Also: Rey Misterio Jr., ECW, Triple-H, NWO, Blue Meanie.

July 1999 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Vince McMahon, Vincent, Eric Bischoff, Giant Baba.

Aug. 1999: WrestleMania XV: The Real Winners And Losers! Also: Van Dam-Lynn, Saturn, Goldust, Steiner-Bagwell.

Sept. 1999: Shane, Come Back! Can Vince Survive Without His Son? Also: Bret Hart, Rick Rude, Ken Shamrock, Hogan-Flair-Page-Goldberg, Tajiri-Crazy.

Oct. 1999 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Mankind & Shamrock, Snow-Holly, Sting, Edge, Flair-Robinson, AIWF.

Nov. 1999: Crash At The Bash! Enter Sid, Viciously! Also: Undertaker-Austin, Acolytes, Master P, Debra, Justin Credible.

Dec. 1999: The Rock: What Makes You Love/Hate This Man? Also: Sting, Shane Douglas, Droz, Piper-Bagwell, Taz.

Holiday 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 Turnbuckle Turkey Awards. Also: Sting, Dugg-Gunn, Undertaker, Steve Corino, 2000 calendar.

Jan. 2000: Dreaming Of An Extreme Christmas (Tommy Dreamer & Francine). Also: Goldberg, Al Snow, Billy Gunn, Doring & Road Kill, cigar-chompers.

Feb. 2000: Wrestling's Top Stars: What's Ahead For 2000! Vince-Bulldog, Mike Awesome, Sid Vicious, Gorilla Monsoon.

March 2000: Kevin Nash & Scott Hall: Getting Inside The Outsiders' Heads. Also: Dudley's, Jerry Lynn, Vince-DX, Kimberly, Zero Gravity.

April 2000 (Special Issue): The Y2K Computer Tournament. Also: Jarrett-PTB, Christopher & Taylor, Lou E. Dangerously, Lawler-Fantastico.

May 2000: Hey, Scott, Watch Your Back! The NWO Is Setting You Up! Also: Hacksaw Duggan, Rikishi Phatu, Test, Mike Awesome.

June 2000: Chris Jericho's Deadliest Enemy: His Ego! Also: Tazz, Kidman-Torrie, Nash-Funk, Bull Bagwell, New Jack.

July 2000 (Special Issue): It's True! Kurt Angle Will Be Hotter Than The Rock In Six Months! Also: Elizabeth, Steve Blackman, Norman Smiley, Spike Dudley, personal questions.

Aug. 2000: WrestleMania 2000: The Real Winners & Losers! Also: Dustin-Funk, Eddie Guerrero, ECW extreme?, WCW analysis.

Sept. 2000: Those Damn Dudleys! Is There An Evil Act Fans Won't Cheer? Also: Billy Kidman, Taka Michinoku, Yoshihiro Tajiri, Jeff Jarrett.

Oct. 2000 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Kurt Angle, Malenko-Saturn, Lance Storm, Tori, Jumbo Tsuruta, ECW headliners.

Nov. 2000: When Will Triple-H Proclaim ... "I'm Sick Of Being A McMahon!" Also: Trish Stratus, Shane Douglas, Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, Yoshihiro Tajiri.

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Jan. 2001: Olympic Games: What Kind Of Angle Has Curt Been Running? Also: Tazz-Lawler, Big Vito, Stacy Keibler, Chris Benoit, Kid Kash, Chyna.

March 2001: Who Knows The Rock's Role? Is He Ditching Wrestling For Hollywood? Also: Trish, Billy Gunn, Jarrett-Sting, C.W. Anderson, Booker T.

May 2001: The WrestleMania Tip Sheet: What You Must Know About The Event Of The Year! Also: Scott Steiner, Dudleys, Malenko & Lita, Shane Douglas, Raven.

Aug. 2001: Game Face! We Haven't Seen Hunter's Ugly Side ... But Just Wait! Also: WWF vs. WCW, Kurt Angle, Vince McMahon, Booker T, Hardys & Lita, Haas brothers, WCW babes.

Oct. 2001: Will Debra Ice Stone-Cold? Also: Vince vs. Shane, Chyna, William Regal, former Big Three stars.

Dec. 2001: The WWF-WCW Dream Matches We Really Want! Also: Tazz, Dudleys, Perry Saturn, Johnny Valentine, 100 WCW facts.

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(Continued from page 16)

chief from *The Jerry Springer Show*, Steve Wilkos. Chants of "Steve! Steve! Steve!" echoed throughout the facility all evening in anticipation of the main event.

Early in the show, Gillberg was being interviewed when Chad Bowman and Dino Divine interrupted him, stating they didn't have any opponents for that night. They taunted Gillberg and said they would "just have to beat him up instead." They jumped into the ring and began pummeling poor Gillberg.

Just like on *The Jerry Springer Show*, out came Steve Wilkos to make the peace. But on this night, it was the security officer who wanted a piece of the action. Wilkos volunteered to be Gillberg's partner for a match later in the show.

Gillberg insisted on beginning the match and had a strong start against Bowman and Divine, but the heels' constant double-teaming put the former WWF light heavyweight champion flat on his back. The Glen Burnie crowd rallied behind Gillberg, and Wilkos tried to get a chant going from his corner.

Finally, Gillberg slipped the noose and crawled over to tag Wilkos. It was the moment the fans paid to see.

Wilkos leveled both Bowman and Divine with clotheslines and forearm shots. Gillberg quickly regained his equilibrium, as he and Wilkos ultimately put Bowman and Divine away with double-sleepers.

In other bouts: Heavyweight champion The Bruiser defeated Adam Flash ... The Holy Rollers beat Danny Doring in a handicap match ... Genesis beat Julio Dinero ... The Ghetto Mafia defeated Doug Delicious & Marcus Jordan ... Romeo Valentino defeated Jose and Joel Maximo in a three-way match ... Red defeated Qenaan Creed for the cruiserweight title ... Tag team champions Joey Matthews & Christian York defeated The Backseat Boyz ... Ronnie Zukko beat Quiet Storm.

McKeesport, PA, NWA East Correspondent: Matt Brock

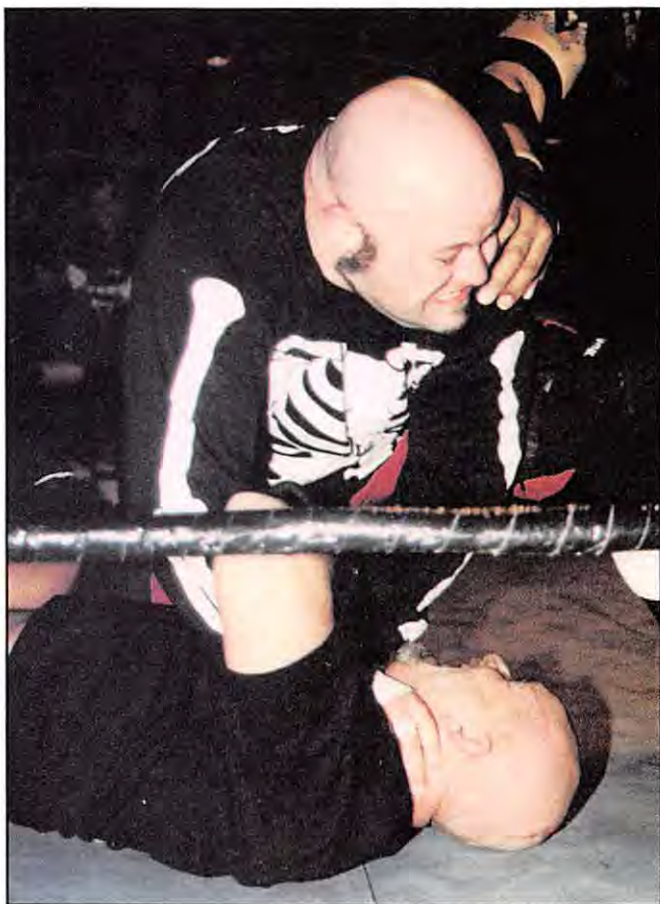
The best-of-three series for the NWA brass knuckles title had reached a score of 1-1, with defending champion Nikita Allanov winning a falls-count-anywhere match, and "Spiffy" Sean Stylez winning a submission bout. At this show, Allanov would battle Stylez in the tiebreaker: a Russian chain match, Allanov's specialty.

As predicted, Allanov dominated the match, but couldn't finish off Stylez. The "Spiffy One" was battered and bloodied in perhaps the most violent match in NWA East history. But Stylez rallied and managed to touch three consecutive corners, with only one more to go.

To ensure victory, Stylez executed the Spiffy driver on Allanov. However, referee Mark Steele was knocked down in the process. He did not see Stylez when he touched the fourth corner.

This gave Allanov time to regroup. He wrapped the chain around his arm and delivered multiple monstrous Russian sickles. The referee regained his composure just in time to count Allanov's pinfall of Stylez. The brass knuckles champion had been successful in this best-of-three series.

In other bouts: Triple crown champion Dirk Ciglar defeated Homicide ... Jimmy Anjel beat Rapture ... Stacy Hunter defeated Jazmynn Viktoria for the women's title ... "Sterling" James Keenan beat Lance Dayton ... Bison beat Axl Law by disqualification ... Kid Cupid defeated Crusher Hansen ... NWA North American champion Quinn Magnum and Crusher Hansen fought to a no-contest ... Jazmynn Viktoria beat Stacy Hunter for the women's belt ... Paul Atlas defeated Scott Venom to retain the Three Rivers championship ... James Keenan & Mad Mike beat The Premier Players for the tag team title ... J.B. Destiny & Homicide defeated Dirk Ciglar & Brandon K. ☐



Dino Divine got the best of Gillberg for much of a recent tag team match for Maryland Championship Wrestling. Divine and Chad Bowman proved to be no match for Steve Wilkos, head of security for *The Jerry Springer Show*. Wilkos made his wrestling debut a successful one.

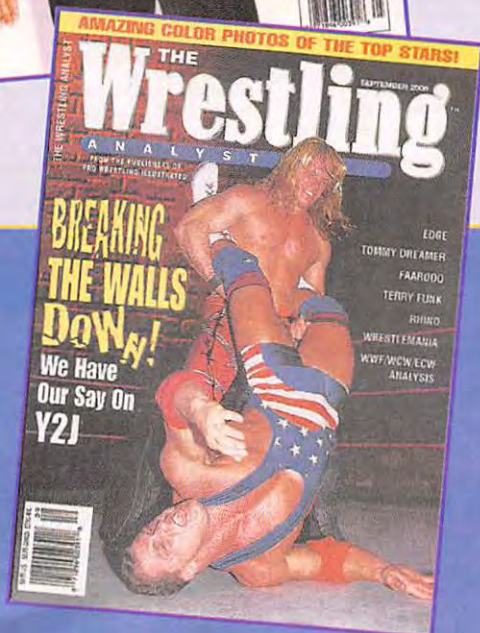
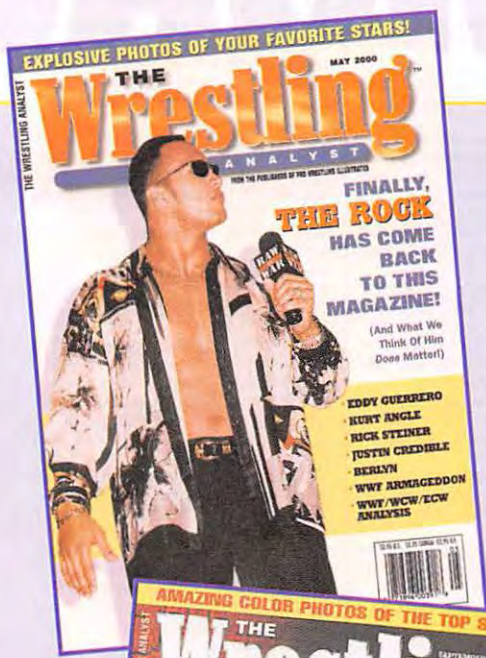
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Aug. 1980: The Reign Of Bloodshed Begins: Stevens & Valentine Win The NWA Tag Team Title! Also: Kerry Von Erich, Backlund & Skaland, Nick Bockwinkel, Zbyszko-Bruno, Keirn-Muraco, Samoans, Wrestling II-Idol.

June 1981: Bruno Sammartino: "I Want To Break Stan Hansen's Neck!" Also: Ted DiBiase, Gagne & Martel, Mike Graham, Mongolian Stomper, Piper-Superstar, Verne Gagne, Tommy Rich.

Sept. 1980: Why Ernie Ladd Says ... "I'm Tired Of Being Your King." Also: Rick Steamboat, Mad Dog Vachon, Bugsy McGraw, Patera-Patterson, Manny Fernandez, Bob Backlund, Greg Gagne, Mike Sharpe.

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March 1984: Is Tito Santana Trying To Blackmail The WWF? Also: Wayne & Sawyer, Hogan-Race, David Von Erich, Jesse Ventura.

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Aug. 1984: Garvin vs. Roberts: "Hands Of Stone" Crushes "The Snake." Also: Freebirds-Destruction Inc., Sawyer-Sullivan, Lawler & Dillon, McDaniel-Race.

Sept. 1984: Kerry Von Erich Wins The NWA World Title: For David ... For Texas ... For Wrestling! Also: Road Warriors-Bundy & Superstar, Johnson & Atlas-Piper & Orndorff, Billy Jack-Sawyer.

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Oct. 1985: David Schultz Gets An NWA Title Shot: Ric Flair—"I Wrestle The Men Hulk Hogan Is Afraid Of!" Also: Misty Blue, Rick Martel, Kendall Windham, George Steele, Killer Brooks, wrestling greats' all-time top 10.

June 1986: Kerry Reveals His Secret: "I've Told Magnum T.A. How To Beat Ric Flair!" Also: Steve Williams, Hogan-Orton, Flair-Bockwinkel, Lex Luger. **Nov. 1986: Morton & Gibson Take A Trip To Badstreet**

U.S.A.: The Rock 'n' Roll Express vs. The Freebirds. Also: Eddie Gilbert, Hogan-Orndorff, Mike Von Erich, Mulligan-Bass.

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Feb. 1988: Ric Flair Admits: "I'm Nothing Without The NWA Belt!" Also: Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Hogan-Andre, Hennig-Lawler, Terry Taylor.

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Jan. 1993: Sting Turns Sadistic: "Hurting Jake Makes Me Happy!" Also: Anderson & Eaton, Bushwhackers-Moondogs, Ramon-Savage, Natural Disasters, Masa Chono.

Feb. 1993: WWF Champion Bret Hart: His Five Most Dangerous Challenges. Also: Sgt. Slaughter, Steve Austin, Rick Steiner, Bob Backlund, Terry Taylor.

April 1993 What's In? What's Out? Also: Razor Ramon, Rick Steamboat, Patriot, Tatanka, Brian Christopher.

May 1993: Sumo Sadism: Will Yokozuna Make His Biggest Splash At WrestleMania? Also: Jim Cornette, Christopher-Jarrett, Benoit-Scorpio, Windham & Rhodes, Hennig-Luger.

Nov. 1993: Bret Hart vs. Lex Luger: It's Not Over Yet! Also: Rude-Dustin, Hulk Hogan, Marty Jannetty, Heavenly Bodies, Tatanka, Sherri Martel.

Jan. 1994: Roasted, Broiled, Fried, Baked ... Any Way You Cook It, Hogan's A Chicken! Also: Rude-Flair, Bagwell & Scorpio, Jim Cornette, Jerry Lawler, Hansen & T. Funk-Abdullah & Sullivan.

May 1994: Aftershocks! How The Royal Rumble Shook Up WrestleMania. Also: Hulk Hogan, Boss, Douglas-Sherri, Patriot, Improve WCW.

July 1994: Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan: We Preview The Inevitable Battle. Also: Dreamer-Snuka, Jim Crockett's WWN, Ted DiBiase, Shane Douglas, Terra Ryzing.

Aug. 1994: Bret's Nightmare Team Becomes A Reality: Owen Hart & Yokozuna. Also: Cactus-Vader, MOM, Flair-Badd, Nasty Boys, Luna Vachon.

Sept. 1994 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report! Also: Big Van Vader, Parker-Hollywood Blonds, Sting-Rude, WWF legal problems, Prince Kharis, Bunkhouse-Rhodes, Public Enemy.

Nov. 1994: Hulk Hogan's New Commandments: Say Prayers, Take Vitamins ... And Kick Butt! Also: Owen-Bret, Lord Steven Regal, Johnny B. Badd, Jerry Lawler, Mikey Whipwreck.

Jan. 1995: Our Holiday Wish List For 1995. Also: Johnny B. Badd, DiBiase-Tatanka, Bob Backlund, PG-13, Hacksaw Duggan.

March 1995 (Special Issue): 1994—The Year In Pictures. Also: Sullivan-Hogan-Sullivan, WWF '95-WWF '85, Ric Flair, MOM, 911.

April 1995: Imagine Wrestling Today It ... Also: Gunn & Smothers, Harlem Heat, Money Inc., Lawler-Cornette.

July 1995: Hulk Hogan's Contract With America. Also: Marty Jannetty, Brian Pillman, Lawrence Taylor, Bill Dundee.

Sept. 1995 (Special Issue): WWF Mid-Year Report. Also: Sting, Funk-Cactus, Flair-Hogan, Razor Ramon, Undertaker.

Oct. 1995: President Backlund! Also: Steiners, Austin & Pillman, Miss Texas, Gordon Solie.

Dec. 1995 (Special Issue): 20Shawn Michaels: Too Good To Be Second Best! Also: Wrestling rulebook, Vega-Ramon, Mama Cornette, Kamala-Duggan, Big Van Vader.

Winter 1995: Exclusive Preview: Sting vs. Hogan: This Time It's For Real! Also: Steiners, Yankem-Undertaker, Bodies-Cornette, Arn Anderson.

May 1996: WWF In-Vader! Can Bret, Shawn, & Razor Play The Pain Game? Also: Public Enemy, Steve Austin, wrestling oddities, Kensuke Sasaki, Ric Flair.

June 1996 (Special Issue): Fear Of Height! How The Giant Is Paralyzing Wrestling. Also: Shock "n" Wrestling, Razor Ramon, Brian Pillman, Konnan.

Aug. 1996: Shawn Michaels: Finally—He Has The Title ... Now Here's What He's Gotta Do With It! Also: Public Enemy-Nastys, Bret Hart, Booty Man-Sullivan, Mabel.

Sept. 1996 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report. Also: Savio Vega, Sabu-Scorpio, Chris Benoit, Goldust, Olympians, Giant.

Oct. 1996: Muscling Back To The Top: The Warrior Is Ready To Rule Again. Also: Warriors & Sasaki-Steiners & Norton, Razor & Diesel, Mabel & Mo, Blue Meanie.

Nov. 1996: Brian Pillman: Next WWF Champ! Also: Giant-Sting, Ray Stevens, Dick Murdoch, Cloudy, John Tenta, WCW shuffle.

Dec. 1996 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: Ahmed Johnson, Ric Flair, Mero & Sabu, Goldust, Sandman.

Holiday 1996: WCW Shocker: Randy Savage Is Set To Join Hulk Hogan's NWO! Also: Steve Austin, Michaels-Goldust, Arn Anderson, Van Dam-Sabu, Steve Williams.

Jan. 1997: It Could Happen! Hogan's Next Move ... Buy WCW! Also: Undertaker, New Jack, Owen-Bulldog, Ted DiBiase.

Feb. 1997: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1997 Has In Store For Them! Also: Michaels-Hart, Pit Bull I, Rey Mysterio Jr., Kevin Nash.

July 1997: Inlighting, Politics, Egos: Is The NWO Losing Its Edge? Also: WWF-ECW, Dean Malenko, Super 8 tourney, Jerry Lawler.

Sept. 1997 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report: Plus: NWO, Shawn-Bret, football players, Terry & Dory Funk, Luna.

Oct. 1997: Bret Hart & Shawn Michaels: How Low Will They Go? Also: Paul E. Dangerously, DDP & Kimberly, Rhodes family, Kelji Muto.

Nov. 1997: 10-Year Grudge! Lex Luger's Career Ruined By J.J. Dillon? Also: Shawn-Bret, Jeff Jarrett, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn.

Dec. 1997 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: Guerreros, Taz, Syxx, Paul Bearer, Brian Christopher.

Hol. 1997: First Owen ... Then 'Taker ... Then Hogan: Who's Gonna Go Next? Also: Steve Austin, Bret Hart, Lex Luger, Ric Flair, Dean Malenko.

April 1998: "We've Won!" Maybe ... But Can The NWO Handle Its Own Success? Also: Ken Shamrock, Steiners-Warriors, Douglas & Francine, Rocky Maivia.

Aug. 1998: We Stand Behind Ya, Vince! It's Time To Fire Austin. Also: Luna-Sable, Randy Savage, Dean Malenko, Super 8 tourney.

Sept. 1998: (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report: Also: Nash-Hogan, Rocky Maivia, Bill Goldberg, Antonio Inoki.

Oct. 1998: The Mother Of All Pay-Per-Views! A WWF-WCW Supercard Is No Longer Just Talk! Also: Sable, Undertaker, Randy Savage, Sabu & Van Dam.

Nov. 1998: Demons Be Damned! Sting Makes The Giant See Red! Also: McMahon-Dude, Jarrett-Blackman, Melanie Pillman, Rey Mysterio Jr.

Dec. 1998 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: ECW midyear report, Ric Flair, Kane.

Hol. 1998: "Quit, Mick!" A Desperate Plea From A Distraught Wife. Also: Chris Jericho, Jason Sensation, wrestlers vs. celebrities, hardcore war.

Jan. 1999: Stone-Cold's Personal Survivor Series. Also: Rock-HHH, NWA, Bret Hart, Howard Finkel, three-way title matches.

Feb. 1999: Hot Rocks! The Anger That Drives Shamrock & The Rock. Also: McMahon-Austin, Spike Dudley, Eric Bischoff, Perry Saturn.

March 1999 (Special Issue): 1998—The Year In Pictures. Also: Hall & Nash, Goldust, Mr. Ooh La La, The Undertaker.

April 1999: Hogan's Retirement: White House Or White Lie? Also: DDP-Hart, Taz-Douglas, Steve Austin, Mankind.

May 1999: Team Coverage: The NWO Reunion! Also: Kane-McMahon, Dallas Page, Funk-Abdullah, WWF sideshow.

June 1999 (Special Issue): Ric Flair: The 10 Feats He Must Accomplish Before He's Through. Also: Rocky Maivia, Juventud Guerrera, Billy Gunn, body parts quiz section.

July 1999: Our Bottom Line ... It's High Time Austin Shows McMahon Respect! Also: Jerry Lawler, Rey Mysterio Jr., Ken Shamrock, DDP-Bigelow-Goldberg.

Aug. 1999: This Man Is Pure Evil! Trust Hogan And He'll Take You To Hell! Plus: Owen Hart, Vader, Sable.

Sept. 1999 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report. Also: DDP-Sting, Douglas-Credible, Big Show-McMahons, Disco Inferno, Keim & Lane.

Oct. 1999: Shawn Michaels' Game Of Corporate Chess! Are The McMahons His Pawns? Also: Steiners, Billy Gunn, Savage & George.

Nov. 1999: Austin's New Powers: Shag Vince? Yeah, Baby! Also: Arn-Sid, Hardy Boys, Ernest Miller, Naoya Ogawa.

Dec. 1999 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10

Faceoff! Also: ECW midyear report, David & Ric Flair, Test & Stephanie.

Hol. 1999: Before The WWF Can Sell ... Read What They Had To Tell! Also: Canyon, Big Show, Spike & Mahoney-Axl & New Jack, Kevin Nash.

Jan. 2000: An Insider's Analysis: Why The Guys Can't Handle Chyna. Also: Revolution, ECW expansion, Guerrero & Misterio, WWF/WCW/ECW women.

Feb. 2000: When Will Mankind Finally Tell The Rock ... "Put A Sock In It"? Also: Goldberg, Chris Jericho, Sabu, Harlem Heat.

Apr. 2000: Can The WWF Survive Without Steve Austin? Also: Dawn Marie-Francine, Meng, Big Show, Madusa.

May 2000: StePhony: The Most Mistrusted McMahon Of All! Also: Harlem Heat & Midnight, David & Ric Flair, Kurt Angle, Rhino.

June 2000 (Special Issue): The Rock: No. 1 On The Jabroni Hit List! Also: Awesome-Van Dam, Kurt Angle, Vampiro, federation jumpers, book of lists.

July 2000: Tori/Torrie, What's The Story? How They Rank In 10 Crucial Categories. Also: Big Show, Tank Abbott, Too Cool, Rhodes-Dreamer, Jeff Jarrett.

Aug. 2000: We're Con-Vinced! This Attack Saved The WWF! Also: Lex Luger, Radicals, Sandman & Rhino, Cyrus.

Sept. 2000 (Special Issue): WWF Mid-Year Report. Also: Mike Awesome, Nova & Chetti, Paul Wight, Chyna, Dr. Sam Sheppard.

Oct. 2000: Is Chyna Robbing Eddie Of His Latino Heat? Also: Abbott-Steiner, Scotty Too Hot, Rob Van Dam, David Fair.

Nov. 2000: Special Fear Issue—Rock-Benoit, Ric Flair, HBK. Also: ECW mid-year report, Bill Goldberg.

Dec. 2000 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: Goldberg-Triple-H, Daffney, Christian & Edge, Jeff Peterson.

(ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE JANUARY 2001 ISSUE)

Jan. 2001: WWF Brat-Itude! Does Steph Always Get Her Way? Not On Your Life! Also: Lance Storm, Mick Foley, Goldberg, Steve Corino, Steve Blackman, Torrie Wilson.

March 2001: Triple-H & The Rock: 10 Reasons They Should Trust Each Other ... 10 Reasons They Should Not! Also: Scott Steiner, Chris Candido, Rob Van Dam, McMahon-ECW, Steven Richards, WCW factions.

May 2001: Do Anything You Want, Stone-Cold: We Can't Hate You. Also: Kronik, Rikishi, Steve Corino, Goldberg, Edge & Christian, Kane.

July 2001: JerichoHolics Beware! Serious Withdrawal Symptoms Are In Store! Also: Tajiri, Steph-Test, Undertaker, Mike Awesome, WCW Elite, Albert.

Sept. 2001: The Rock's Choice: Honor Over Glory! Also: WrestleMania X-Seven, Undertaker-Triple-H, Shane-WCW, TOL II, Scott Hall, Vince McMahon, Chris Jericho.

Nov. 2001: Goldberg! Da Man Who Could Make Or Break Wrestling! Also: Dudley's, Steve Corino, Chris Benoit, Dusty Rhodes, Lita, WWF top tier.

Jan. 2002: Can The Rock Handle The Unrelenting Pressure Of Fame? Also: RVD, Paul Heyman, Terry Gordy, Flash-Jericho, Tajiri-Tazz, WWF-Alliance.

March 2002: Outsiders Looking In! Hall & Nash Take Aim At The WWF! Also: Ivory, Austin-Angle, Christian-Edge, what's ahead in '02.

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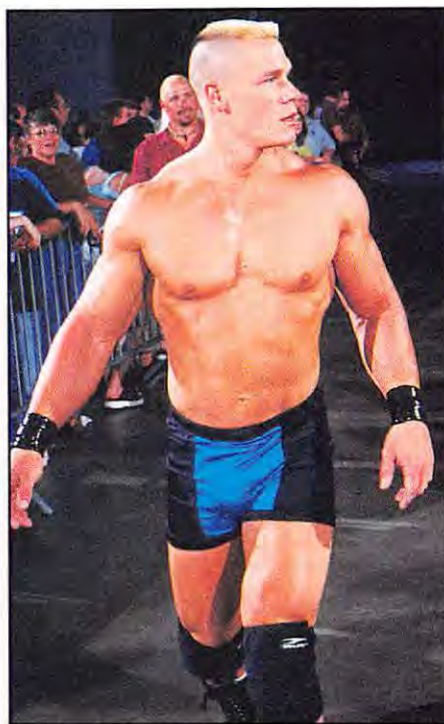
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Wrestler

TOP 10

- 1 HULK HOGAN**
275, Venice Beach, CA
(-) WWF World champion
- 2 YUJI NAGATA**
228, Tokyo, Japan
(-) IWGP heavyweight champion
- 3 TRIPLE-H**
253, Greenwich, CT
(4) No. 1 contender: WWF World title
- 4 THE UNDERTAKER**
304, Dallas, TX
(-) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
- 5 GENICHIRO TENRYU**
235, Tokyo, Japan
(-) All-Japan Triple Crown champion
- 6 EDDIE GUERRERO**
228, El Paso, TX
(-) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 7 STEVE AUSTIN**
252, Victoria, TX
(2) No. 4 contender: WWF World title
- 8 KURT ANGLE**
233, Pittsburgh, PA
(7) No. 5 contender: WWF World title
- 9 PROTOTYPE**
260, Los Angeles, CA
(10) OVW heavyweight champion
- 10 YOSHINARI OGAWA**
202, Fichigi, Japan
(-) GHC heavyweight champion



Prototype

TAG TEAMS

- 1 BILLY GUNN & CHUCK PALUMBO**
Combined weight: 524 pounds
(1) WWF World tag team champions
- 2 TAKESHI MORISHIMA & TAKESHI RIKIOH**
Combined weight: 567 pounds
(-) GHC tag team champions
- 3 AL SNOW & MAVEN**
Combined weight: 442 pounds
(-) No. 1 team: WWF Smackdown
- 4 TAIYO KEA & KEIJI MUTO**
Combined weight: 480 pounds
(2) All-Japan International tag team champions
- 5 JEFF & MATT HARDY**
Combined weight: 422 pounds
(-) No. 1 team: WWF Raw
- 6 MASA CHONO & HIROYOSHI TENZAN**
Combined weight: 505 pounds
(-) IWGP International tag team champions
- 7 SCOTT HALL & X-PAC**
Combined weight: 511 pounds
(-) No. 2 team: WWF Raw
- 8 DOUG BASHAM & DAMAJA**
Combined weight: 481 pounds
(10) OVW Southern tag team champions
- 9 THE HURRICANE & RIKISHI**
Combined weight: 634 pounds
(-) No. 2 team: WWF Smackdown
- 10 THE NEW HEAVENLY BODIES**
Combined weight: 465 pounds
(-) NWA tag team champions

WWF RAW

World Champion:

HULK HOGAN

(-) 275, Venice Beach, CA

- 1—THE UNDERTAKER**
(-) 304, Dallas, TX
- 2—EDDIE GUERRERO**
(-) 228, El Paso, TX
- 3—STEVE AUSTIN**
(-) 252, Victoria, TX
- 4—ROB VAN DAM**
(-) 237, Battle Creek, MI
- 5—SCOTT HALL**
(-) 290, Miami, FL
- 6—BRADSHAW**
(-) 309, Roscoe, TX
- 7—THE BIG SHOW**
(-) 485, Aiken, SC
- 8—BROCK LESNAR**
(-) 295, Minneapolis, MN
- 9—SPIKE DUDLEY**
(-) 155, Providence, RI
- 10—STEVEN RICHARDS**
(-) 227, Philadelphia, PA

WWF SMACKDOWN

World Champion:

HULK HOGAN

(-) 275, Venice Beach, CA

- 1—TRIPLE-H**
(-) 253, Greenwich, CT
- 2—CHRIS JERICHO**
(-) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- 3—KURT ANGLE**
(-) 233, Pittsburgh, PA
- 4—EDGE**
(-) 240, Toronto, Ontario
- 5—TAJIRI**
(-) 213, Tokyo, Japan
- 6—TEST**
(-) 282, Toronto, Ontario
- 7—MARK HENRY**
(-) 372, Austin, TX
- 8—ALBERT**
(-) 353, Boston, MA
- 9—D-VON DUDLEY**
(-) 260, New York, NY
- 10—BILLY KIDMAN**
(-) 195, Allentown, PA

OVW

OVW Champion:

PROTOTYPE

(C) 260, Los Angeles, CA

- 1—LEVIATHAN**
(1) 325, parts unknown
- 2—FLASH**
(3) 225, Detroit, MI
- 3—BULL BUCHANAN**
(2) 325, Marietta, GA
- 4—DAVID FLAIR**
(-) 205, Charlotte, NC
- 5—SEAN O'HAIRE**
(10) 270, Hilton Head, SC
- 6—NICK DINSMORE**
(6) 226, Jefferson, IN
- 7—SHELTON BENJAMIN**
(8) 263, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—ROB CONWAY**
(7) 240, Pittsburgh, PA
- 9—REDD DOGG**
(-) 240, Lafayette, LA
- 10—PAYNE**
(-) 245, Chicago, IL

HWA

HWA Champion:

RACE STEELE

(-) 255, Albuquerque, NM

- 1—JOHNNY THE BULL**
(-) 236, Atlanta, GA
- 2—E.Z. MONEY**
(-) 239, Atlantic City, NJ
- 3—STEVE BRADLEY**
(-) 239, Raymond, NH
- 4—LANCE CADE**
(-) 253, San Antonio, TX
- 5—SHANNON MOORE**
(-) 181, Cameron, NC
- 6—KIMO**
(-) 400, Samoa
- 7—JAMIE KNOBLE**
(-) 190, Hanover, WV
- 8—CHAD COLLYER**
(-) 208, Liberty, IN
- 9—MATT STRYKER**
(-) 205, Cincinnati, OH
- 10—CODY HAWK**
(-) 215, Malibu, CA

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue. Note: In an effort to keep the ratings as up-to-date as possible, these pages are often the last to be sent to the printer. Thus, the ratings may reflect changes not reflected in the remainder of the issue.

For period ended May 1, 2002

AMERICAN PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Micky Richards; 2—Chief Jay Eagle; 3—Chad Colt; 4—Section 8; 5—Scotty Smooth; 6—Jesse Black; 7—Boomer Payne; 8—Mike Madden; 9—Chuck King; 10—Jason Bolt.

BORDER CITY WRESTLING: Champion—Johnny Swinger; 1—Vampiro; 2—Simon Diamond; 3—Scott D'Amore; 4—Nova; 5—El Tornado; 6—King Kong Bundy; 7—Larry Destiny; 8—Mike Legacy; 9—Chris Sabin; 10—Gutter.

CENTRAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Mongoose; 1—Joe Price; 2—Terry Alan; 3—Bo Johnson; 4—Rage; 5—Miss Diamond; 6—Shane Lewis; 7—Tommy Green; 8—Maddawg; 9—Little Larry D; 10—Skip Sherwood.

CHAMPIONSHIP PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Shane Shadows; 1—Switchblade; 2—Julio Dinero; 3—Chris Harvard; 4—Brock Singleton; 5—Brian Johnson; 6—Mason Hunter; 7—John Balsamo; 8—Johnny Graham; 9—Jacey North; 10—Bob Keller.

CLASSIC CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—J-Money; 1—Rob Noxious; 2—Rockin' Rebel; 3—John Balsamo; 4—Fumar; 5—Ruckus; 6—Johnny Graham; 7—Lobo Loco; 8—Sam Desperately; 9—Larry Brown; 10—Tai.

EXODUS WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—George South Jr.; 1—Rick Morton; 2—George South; 3—Scotty McKeever; 4—Jason King; 5—Gladiator II; 6—Masked Superstar II; 7—Ivan Koloff; 8—Jimmy Valiant; 9—Rick Karloff; 10—Cruel Connection II.

GLOBAL CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Dan Sawyer; 1—Scotty Riggs; 2—Seth Stevens; 3—Night Prowler; 4—Guff Grayson; 5—Vinny V; 6—Inhuman Fly; 7—J.J. Steele; 8—Eli the Killa Clown; 9—Sweet Daddy; 10—Mason Fury.

NORTHEAST WRESTLING: Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Jerry Lawler; 2—Brian Christopher; 3—Tiger Khan; 4—Julio Dinero; 5—Mike Quackenbush; 6—Joey Matthews; 7—Chris Hamrick; 8—Johnny Heartbreaker; 9—Christian York; 10—Jeff Starr.

NWA EAST: Champion—Dirk Ciglar; 1—Nikita Allanov; 2—Crusher Hansen; 3—Paul Atlas; 4—Brandon K; 5—Homicycle; 6—Sean Stylez; 7—Axl Law; 8—Dale Price; 9—Mad Mike; 10—Bison.

RING OF HONOR: Champion—Title Vacant; 1—American Dragon; 2—Low-Ki; 3—Christopher Daniels; 4—Spanky; 5—Xavier; 6—Eddie Guerrero; 7—James Maritato; 8—Red; 9—Paul London; 10—Jay Briscoe.

WORLD LEAGUE WRESTLING: Champion—The Drill Instructor; 1—Ron Harris; 2—Bull Schmitt; 3—Butch Reed; 4—Wade Chism; 5—Ron Powers; 6—Derek McQuinn; 7—Superstar Steve; 8—Matt Murphy; 9—Trevor Rhodes; 10—Marc Godecker.

WORLD XTREME WRESTLING: Champion—Sugaa; 1—Samu; 2—Malachi; 3—Samoan Storm; 4—Big Poppa Pete; 5—Wenzel; 6—Big Dawg Molson; 7—Inferno; 8—L.A. Smooth; 9—Nuisance; 10—Heavy Metal Maniac.

NWA

NWA Champion:

DAN SEVERN

(-) 262, Coldwater, MI

1—QUINN MAGNUM

(1) 265, Pittsburgh, PA

2—HOTSTUFF HERNANDEZ

(3) 280, Houston, TX

3—SPYDER

(2) 225, New York, NY

4—SHINYA HASHIMOTO

(C) 287, Gifu, Japan

5—DOUG GILBERT

(-) 248, Lexington, TN

6—MASON HUNTER

(-) 251, Morgantown, WV

7—DAVID YOUNG

(-) 246, Memphis, TN

8—TOM BRANDI

(8) 248, Norristown, PA

9—DIRK CIGLAR

(6) 195, Mount Pleasant, PA

10—JOHNNY ALLBLACK

(-) 254, Honolulu, HI

WWA

WWA Champion:

SCOTT STEINER

(-) 275, Detroit, MI

1—NATHAN JONES

(-) 330, Queensland, Australia

2—JEFF JARRETT

(C) 230, Nashville, TN

3—SABU

(5) 220, Bombay

4—A.J. STYLES

(9) 202, Gainesville, GA

5—JERRY LYNN

(-) 216, Minneapolis, MN

6—ALAN FUNK

(7) 233, Alliance, OH

7—DEVON STORM

(3) 229, Pacific Palisades, CA

8—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER

(1) 230, Memphis, TN

9—BUFF BAGWELL

(-) 240, Marietta, GA

10—ERNEST MILLER

(-) 236, Atlanta, GA

JAPAN

1—YUJI NAGATA

(-) 228, Tokyo, Japan
IWGP heavyweight champion

2—GENICHIRO TENRYU

(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan
All Japan Triple Crown champion

3—YOSHINARI OGAWA

(-) 202, Fichigi, Japan
GHC heavyweight champion

4—MASA CHONO

(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan

5—KEIJI MUTO

(-) 245, Yamaguchi, Japan

6—MITSU HARU MISAWA

(-) 228, Ashikaga, Japan

7—AKIRA TAUE

(-) 265, Chichibu, Japan

8—SATOSHI KOJIMA

(-) 223, Tokyo, Japan

9—SHINYA HASHIMOTO

(-) 287, Gifu, Japan

10—TADAO YASUDA

(-) 310, Tokyo, Japan

MEXICO

1—UNIVERSO DOS MIL

(-) 240, Mexico City, Mexico
CMLL heavyweight champion

2—LATIN LOVER

(-) 190, Monterrey, Mexico
AAA heavyweight champion

3—EL HIJO DEL SANTO

(-) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico

4—DR. WAGNER JR.

(-) 215, Mexico City, Mexico

5—PERRO AGUAYO JR.

(-) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico

6—SHOCKER

(-) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico

7—RAYO DE JALISCO JR.

(-) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico

8—BLACK TIGER

(-) 193, Mexico City, Mexico

9—HECTOR GARZA

(-) 220, Monterrey, Mexico

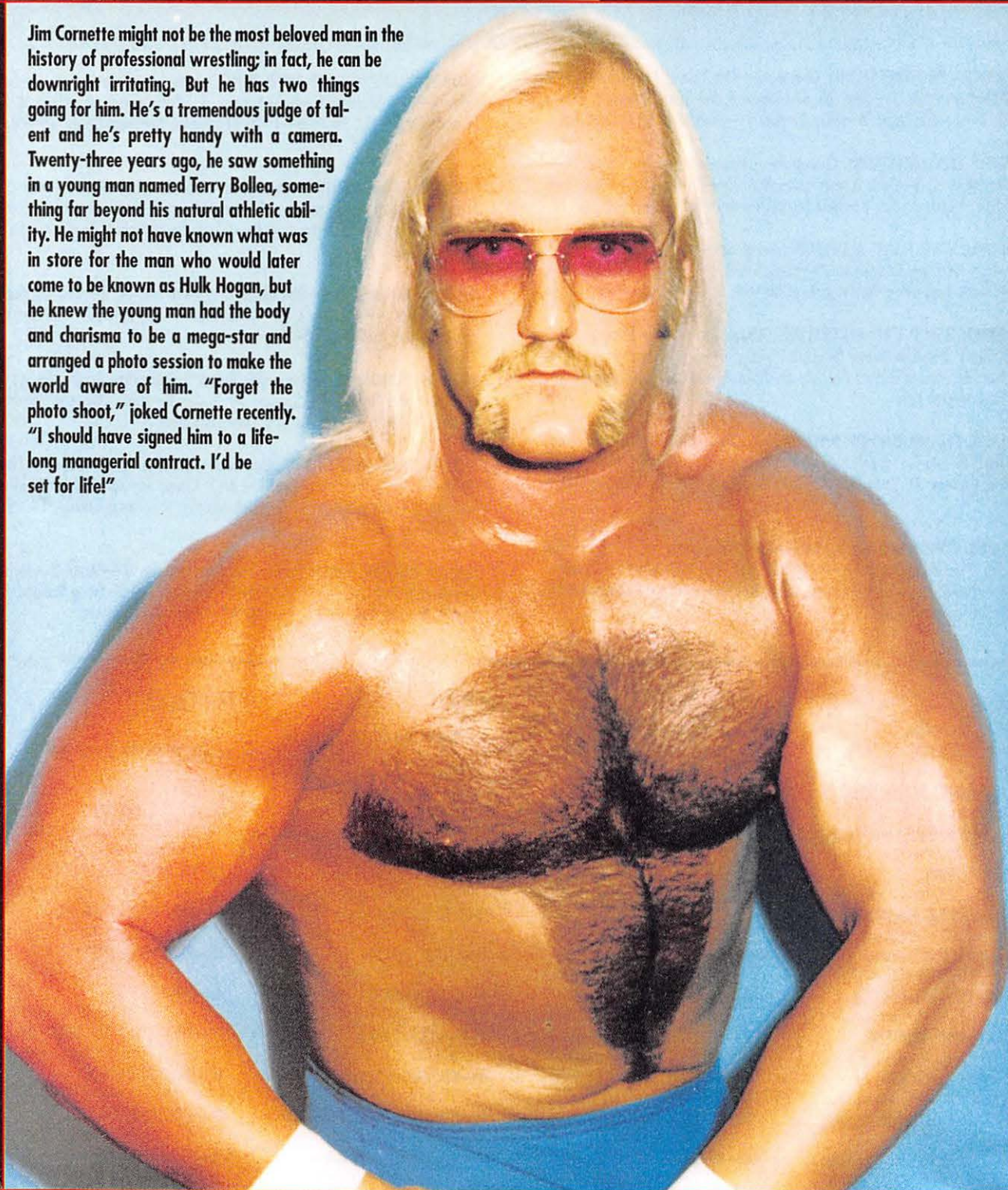
10—MR. NIEBLA

(-) 185, Cuatitlan, Mexico

WOW[®]

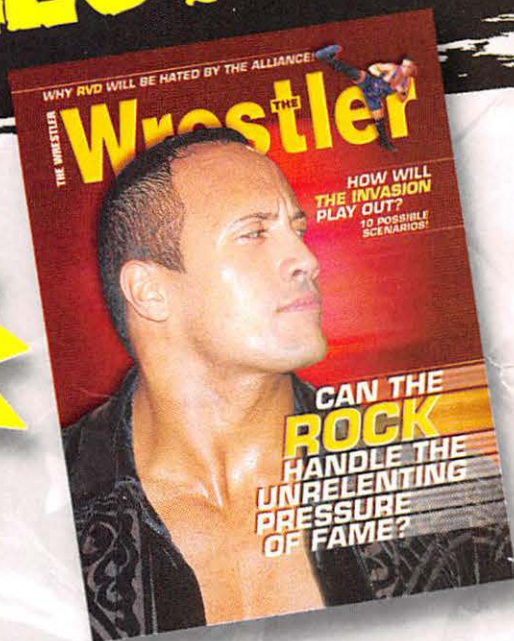
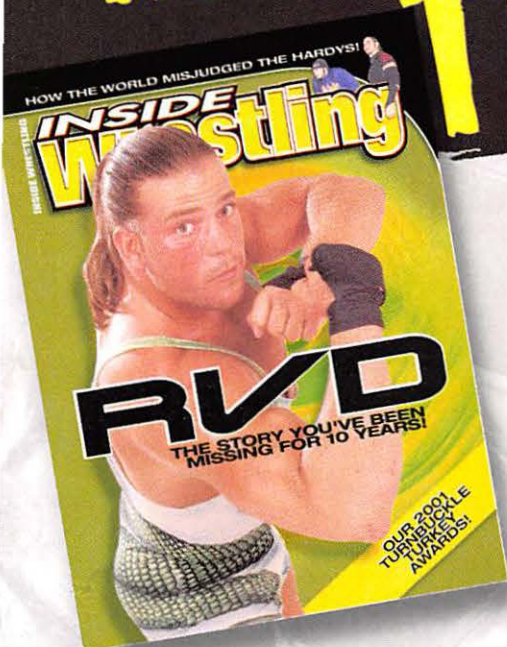
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